

A SHORT  
AND SVRE WAY  
TO  
HEAVEN,

and present Happines.

TAUGHT IN A TREATISE OF  
OVR CONFORMITT  
WITH THE WILL OF GOD.

Written by the Reuerend Father  
*ALFONSVS RODRIGVEZ*  
of the *Society of Iesus*, in his worke in-  
tituled, *The exercise of perfection and*  
*Christian vertue.*

Translated out of Spanish:

*Ira in indignatione eius: & vita in volun-*  
*tate eius. Psal. 29. 6.*

Wrath in his indignation: and life in  
his will.



*Permissu Superiorum 1630.*





TO  
THE REVEREND  
AND  
RELIGIOUS MOTHER  
ANNA OF THE  
ASCENSION.

PRIORESSE OF THE ENGLISH  
*Teresians in Antwerpe.*

**R**everend & Religious  
Mother,

Many excellēt Treatises haue  
seene light by the happy pēne  
of F. Alfonso Roderigues, that  
great Master of Spirit. But this  
alone may worthily seeme to  
carry the nature of a Centure,  
wherein all the lines of perfe-  
ction drawne through his o-  
ther workes come iointly to  
meete. The highest ayme of  
vertue both in time and eter-

nity, is to set an exact conformity betweene our soule and God: & the best wayes of spirit, such, as leade to this toppe. What store of excellent precepts, solid helps, and most effectuall meanes our Author hath heere collected to so noble an end, diligent perusal wil discouer. To which purpose as I chanced vpon the worke apparelled in English, so my singular affection and respect to your selfe & yours, would not permit me to stand long in deliberation whether I should first addresse it, after it had receiued life from the print. For to whom can a treatise of diuine conformity be more due, euen in rigour of claime & challenge,  
then

then to a family of that illustrious Order, the Foudresse wherof reflected vpo the world admirable light of exāple in this kinde; hauing bene trained in spirit as herselfe testifieth, vnder the conduct of three most eminent men of the Authōrs Profession; as of B. Father Borgia Duke of Gandia and third Generall of the Society, *Beatified by the holy Church*, Father Baltazar Aluarez, whō by diuine reuelation she vnderstood to haue bene the greatest Saint then liuing in this world, and Father Francis Ribera, whose rare vertue was accompanied with equal learning. And who more worthy of the first view, then a Superiour of the  
the

the same family, by whose discrete and pious government the whole cōpany maintaines in flower & vigour the primitive spirit of their Foundresse, especially in this high point of true Conformity. Accept therefore Reuerend Mother of this little presēt, rather as a pledge of cōgratulation, then a spurre of new incitemēt, with my best wishes that your house may euer prosper, grow vp, & flourish, as it doth, to the glory of our Lord, the honour of your Fōudresse, the Cōfort of your soules, and the good of our whole Nation.

*Your R. euer humble seruant  
in Christ Iesus.*

I. C.



A TREATISE OF OVR  
CONFORMITY VVITH THE Iam. 28.  
will of God.

THE I. CHAPTER.

*In which there are laid two principall foundations.*

**N** *On sicut ego volo , sed sicut tu, Matt. 26.*  
not as I will, but as thou wilt, 39.  
O Lord. The Holy Fathers assigne two reasons, why the sonne of God would descend downe from heauen, and become perfect man by vesting himselfe with our humanity: the one was, to redeeme vs with his precious blood; the other, to shew vs by his example, and teach vs by his doctrine the right way to heauen. For as it would haue auailed vs nothing to haue knowne the way, if we had been still detained  
A in

Ber. ser.  
2. in Cir-  
cumcis.  
Dom.

in prison; so likewise (saith *S. Bernard*) it would haue little profited vs, to haue been deliuered out of prison, if we had not knowne the way: and seeing God was inuisible, it was necessary (vnto the end we might see him, and by seeing imitate him) that he should become visible and cloath himselfe in our humanity, as shepheards goe apparelled in the skins of sheep, that their flocke may be allured to follow them, by seeing in them their owne resemblance. And so that holy Pope. *S. Leo* saith; *Nisi enim esset verus*

Leo Pa-  
pa 1. ser.  
1. de Na-  
tiui. Do.

*Deus, nō adferret remedium; & nisi esset verus homo, non praberet exemplum.*

Vnles he had been true God, he could not haue brought vs remedy; and vnles he had been true man, he could not haue afforded vs an exāple. But he hath done both the one and the other most abundantly, out of that excessse of loue which he bare to man, and therefore as our redemption hath been most amply great,

Psal. 119  
7.

*& copiosa apud eum redemptio*, so also hath his doctrine been, since he hath not deliuered it vnto vs alone in words, but much more by the example of his works,

*capit Iesus facere & docere*, saith the

Euan-

Euangelist S. Luke, Iesus first begun **Act. 1. 1** with the practise and execution (and that for the most part of his Blessed life) and afterwards began to preach in the last three yeares, or two yeares and a halfe, before dyed.

Now among many other things which our Sauour Christ hath taught vs, one of the principall is, an entire conformity with the will of God, in all occurrences and occasions: the which he teacheth vs not only in words, when setting downe vnto vs a forme of prayer, he tells vs, that one of those things which we are to beseech, and begge of our heauenly Father, is: *fiat voluntas tua sicut in cælo & in terra*, thy will be done in earth as it is in heauen: but he much more confirms this doctrine by his blessed exāple, seeing he professeth to haue descended from heauen vnto no other end, *descendi de cælo non vt faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem eius qui misit me*. I haue descended from heauen not to do mine owne will, but the will of him who sent me. And on that sacred day, when hauing instituted his holy supper, and almost ended the worke of our redemption,

tion, in that prayer of his in the Garden, although his flesh and blood, and sensitiue powers had a naturall horroure, and auersion from death, by which he witnessed  
 Mat. 26. that he was perfect man, saying; *Pater*  
 39. *mi. si possibile est transeat à me calix iste,* Father if it be possible let this chalice passe from me: notwithstanding his will was alwaies prompt & desirous, to drinke of that chalice, which his Father sent him; and therefore he presently adds, neuertheless, be it not as I will, but as thou wilt ô Lord.

But vnto the end that we may descend vnto the very depth, to ground our selues very well in this conformely, we must first lay two brieue, but substantiall foundations; vpon which as vpon two hinges our whole matter must be sustained. The first is, that all our profit in vertue and perfection consists in this conformity with the will of God, which according as this shall be more full and perfect, shall likewise be more excellent and great. This foundation is easy to comprehend, since it must be graunted, that perfection essentially consists in the charity and the loue of God, and that the more  
 perfect



perfect we shall be, the greater shall our  
loue be to Almighty God: the holy Euan-  
gell is full of this doctrine, as also the Epi-  
stles of *S. Paul*, and the liues of Saints.

*Hoc est maximum & primum mādatum*

Mat. 22.

*&c.* This is the greatest and the first co-

38. &

maundment, *Charity is the band of per-*

Colos. 3.

*fection and the greatest of all these is cha-*

14. 1.

*rity*, the loue of God is of all things the

Corin.

most high and perfect, and the most ex-

13. 13.

cellent and dearest part thereof, and (as it

were the abstract and quintessence of this

charity) is an intire conformity with the

will of God, in desiring nothing but what

may be most pleasing vnto his Diuine

Maiestie. *Eadem velle, & eadem nolle*

Hier ep.

*ea demum firma amicitia est*, saith *S.*

ad De-

*Hierom* borrowing the sentence from an

metriad

other Philosopher: so that the more one

lib. de a-

is conformable and vnited with the will

micit.

of God, the better and more perfect he

shall be, it being moreouer most certaine,

that the will of God, is the most excel-

lent and perfect thing, which may be ima-

gined, and so by consequence he is better

and more perfect, who comes the neerer

to the will of God. And it was the Argu-

ment of an other Philosopher; if God be

the most exquisit and perfect thing of all, the nearer on comes for to resemble him, the more exquisit and perfect he shall be.

The second foundation is; that there can chaunce and happen nothing in the world, but by the will and ordinance of God, sinne ōly excepted, of which God is neither Author, nor cā possibly be. For as cold is naturally opposit to heat, warmth to water, and darkenesse to the sunne, so much and infinitely more, is it repugnant to the eternall goodnes of Almighty God, to haue any friendship or commerce with wickednes, as the Prophet *Abacuc* testifies: *Mundi sunt oculi tui, ne videas malum, & respicere ad iniquitatem non poteris*, thy eyes are pure that thou maiſt not see sinne, & thou maiſt not looke vpon iniquity. Affirming that he cannot, nor may not looke vpon it in that ſence as we vsually ſay a man who hath a horreur frō a thing cannot abid its ſight, whereby he giues vs to vnderſtand, the great auerſion and deteſtation which God Almighty hath from wickednes, that he cannot endure the ſight of it. *Quoniam non Deus volens iniquitatem tu es*. Seeing thou art not a God (ſaith Dauid) who haſt any will

Abacu.  
2. 3.

Pſal. 55.

will that iniquity should be: and againe, *Psal. 44.*  
*dilexisti iustitiam & odisti iniquitatem,* 8.  
 thou hast loued iustice & hated iniquity.  
 In brieft the holy scripture doth euery  
 where abound, with testimonies of Gods  
 mighty hatred and detestation of sinne;  
 and therfore he can no waies be Author  
 of it. But excepting sinne I say, all other  
 things, all miseries and all calamities, in-  
 flicted on vs for our punishments, proceed  
 from the ordination and the will of God:  
 which foundation is most infallible; there  
 being no such thing as chaunce or for-  
 tunate in the world, as the Heathens er-  
 roniouly did faine. neither are those  
 goods, which the idle world abusiuely cal  
 goods of Fortune the donatiues of any  
 such thing, as Fortun, or of chaunce; since  
 there is no such thing as they are said to  
 be, but they are gifts bestowed by the  
 hand of God; As the Holy Ghost tea-  
 cheth vs, by the wiseman, *bona & mala,* *Eccl. 11.*  
*vita & mors, paupertas & honestas a* 14.  
*Deo sunt,* both good and euell, life and  
 death, pouerty and riches are all proceed-  
 ing from Almighty God.

And although these things are often  
 by other secondary causes brought to  
 passe,

passc; notwithstanding it is most certaine, that there happens nothing in this great Republique of the world, without order from this souueraigne Emperour who hath all dominion in it, there is nothing by chaunce or accident to God, but all which happēs to vs, first passeth through his hands, and his disposure of it. He hath numbred all the bones of your body, and keep a iust account of euery haire of your head, of the which there doth not moult or perish one, without his particular prouidence. but what do I speake of men? seing our Sauour himselfe affirmes in the Euangell, that not a sparrow falls into the Fowlers nette, without his ordinance and permission. *Nonne duo*

Mat. 10.  
29.

*passeres asse veniunt, & vnus ex eis non cadet super terram sine patre vestro?*

Neither is there any lease shaken with the wind, but by his good pleasure: and also the wiseman says speaking of lots, *sortes*

Pro. 16.  
33.

*mittuntur in sinu, sed à Domino temperentur* . Howsoeuer the lots are cast into

the Lapp, yet according to the pleasure of God they are mingled there, & by his appointment drawne out and distributed,

Aa. 1.  
26.

*cecidit fors super Matthiam* the lot fell vpon

vpon Matthias but not by chaunce, it being the pleasure of God by that means, to elect him for his Apostle; This verity, the better and more morall Philosophers, haue by the only helpe of naturall light found out, and so they say, that diuers things, in respect of their secondary causes, are fortuit and casuall, whereas if you regard their primitiue cause, they are no waies casuall, but done with mature deliberation and deligne: which they declare by the example of one sending a seruant vpon some occasion to a certaine place, and dispatching another vnto the same place, by another way; now they meeting both together there, & one not knowing of the others sēding do straight imagine that they are met by chaunce, whereas vnto him who sent them it is no casuall thing, but done with purpose & deliberation. In like manner although oftentimes som things for as much as men can perceauē fall out as it were by chaūce, because they are vnexpected vnto them, neuertheles vnto God Almighty they are no waies so, he hauing so ordained them, for ends secret and hidden to the eyes of men, and only knowne vnto his prouidence.

uidence . That which we are to gather from these two foundations , which we haue laid , is the conclusion of what we haue proposed: which is , that seeing all things which happen to vs , are proceeding from the hand of God; and that all perfection consists in the conforming of our selues vnto his will ; we are therefore to receaue all things as coming from his hand , and conforme our selues in them, vnto his diuine and holy will , we are not to esteeme any accident to come by chaunce , or that any man hath had his hand in it; for this only serues to vex and disquiet vs: neither are we to thinke that this or that is happened vnto vs , by any one procurement , and that otherwise it would not haue chaunced, for such and such reasons as may occure vnto vs. But letting passe all such imaginations, we are to receaue all things, as being sent vs from the hand of God , by what way soeuer they arriue vnto vs. For it is he who doth direct them so . One of those renowned Fathers of the desert, was wont to say , that a man should neuer attaine true quietnes and content, vntil he could perswade himselfe , that there was no  
body

body els in the world but God and he; Doroth.  
And *S. Dorotheus* says, that those aūtient doct. 7.

Fathers were very conuerfant in recea-  
uing all things as coming from the hand  
of almighty God, how sleight so euer they  
were in themselues, and in what manner  
so euer they chaunced to them, and that  
by this meanes, they attained vnto a great  
quietnes and peace, leading euen in their  
mortall bodies heauenly liues.

## THE II. CHAPTER.

*Wherein the second foundation is more  
amply declared.*

**I**T is a verity so confirmed by holy  
scripture, that all afflictions, and euills  
which happen vnto vs for punishment of  
our sinnes, are proceeding from the om-  
nipotent hand of God, that it were need-  
les for vs to spend more time in prooffe  
therof, did not the diuell seeke to obscure  
it with his malicious craft, seeing from  
an other verity which we affirmed to be  
infallibly true, to wit that God is neither  
Author nor cause of sinne, he infers a false  
and lying conclusion, in perswading some  
that,

that, how euer those harmes which are incident vnto vs by naturall causes, and by creatures deuoid of reason, as sicknesse, famine, sterility and the like, are all proceeding from the hand of God, seing that they commit no sinne, in what they do, neither is it possible they should, in that they are incapable of sinning: neuer theles those harmes and damages which arrive vnto vs through the faults of others, as when any one doth strike and wound, or robbe and iniure me, are not proceeding from the hand of God, neither happening through his appointment and providence, but through the malice and perversity of the others will; which errour, and such who receaue not euery thing as coming from the Almighty hand of

**Doroth.** God, *S. Dorotheus* doth excellently reprehend where he saies. *We when we heare any word spoken against vs, or chaunce*  
*» to be iniured of any one, do imitate dogs,*  
*» who when any one throwes a stone at*  
*» them, not regarding him who threw it,*  
*» do runne and bite the stone; so we consider not God Almighty to be him, who*  
*» procured vs this affliction, to cleanse vs*  
*» from our sinnes, but straight runne vnto the*



the stone, which is to wreake our anger,,  
on our neighbour.

To free vs from this errour, as also to  
ground vs surely in the Catholicke truth,  
the Diuins consider in the sinnes which  
man comits two thinges which do con-  
cure; the one is the motion and exte-  
riour acte; the other the disorder of the  
will, whereby we come to transgresse the  
comaund of God. Of the first God is  
the Author; and of the second man. Let  
vs put the case; on entring into quarell  
with an other kille him: vnto the killing  
of him, there is required, that he lay hand  
to his sword, that he lift it vp, that he let  
fall his arme, and giue the blow; with di-  
uers other naturali motions, which may  
be a part considered by themselues, with-  
out the disorder and commotion of that  
mans will, by whose interuention that  
other man is kild: and of all these mo-  
tions by themselues and considered apart,  
God is the Author, and produceth them  
as he doth all other effects in creatures  
deuoid of reason; seing that as nothing of  
it selfe, without the helpe of God can  
put it selfe in acte, or motion; so also  
(without him) this man could not haue  
stired

fired his arme, nor handled his sword,  
 and moreouer these naturall actes in the  
 selues are not bad, seeing that if a man  
 should make vse of them in his defence,  
 in a lawfull warre, or as executioner of  
 Iustice, and so kill an other, he should  
 comit no sinne; but of that fault, which  
 is in the disorder of the will, by which  
 this wicked wretch comits that outrage,  
 and of the disaray of reason, God is not  
 the cause, how euer he permit it, in that  
 he could haue hindered it, and yet out of  
 his iust iudgments, doth not. They vse  
 to declare this by a comparison, a man  
 hath a wound in his foot, and by reason  
 therof he haults, the cause why he doth  
 go vpon his foot, is the vertue and mo-  
 tiue power of the soule, but the occasion  
 of his lamenes in his wound, and not the  
 vertue of his soule: so likewise, in those  
 actiōs by which men come to sinne, God  
 is the cause of the actiōn; but the defect  
 and sinne, proceeds meerly from the  
 mans free will.

So that although God neither is nor  
 can be the Author of any sinne, yet we are  
 assuredly to hold, that all the euill in-  
 flicted on vs for punishment of our sins,  
 whe-

whether they arriue by intermission of causes naturall, or els by vnreasonable creatures, by what way, or in what manner so euer they are directed, are all proceeding from the hand of God, and so ordained by his high prouidence, it is God alone, who lifts vp that hand which strikes you, & moues that tongue which reuiles and iniurs you. *si erit malum in ciuitate quod Deus non fecerit* says the Prophet *Amos*, is there any euill in the Citty that God hath not done? the holy scripture is full of this verity, attributing all the euill which one man doth to another, vnto God, & saying that God alone is Author of it.

Amos. 3  
6.

In the second booke of the Kings God tooke the inflicting of that punishment vpon him selfe, where with he punished *Dauid* by meanes of his sonne *Abfalon*, for that adultery and murder which he had committed, saying: *Behould I will raise vp against thee, a plague from thine owne house, and bereaue thee of thy wives before thine eyes, & giue them to thy neighbour: thou hast committed this (thy wickednes) in primat, but I will bring to passe that, which I haue said, in the sight of all Israell,*

2. Reg.  
12. 11.

Israell, and in the face of the sunne. whence also it is, that those impious Kings, who with great pride & cruelty did execute most cruell vengeance on the people of God, were called by the holy Scripture, instruments of the diuine Iustice, *uo unto Assur the rod of my fury,* and of Cyrus King of Persia, by whom God purposed to punish the Chaldeans, he saies, *cuius apprehendi dexteram* whose right hand I haue laid hold of. S. Au-

Isa. 10.5

Isa. 45.1.

Aug. su.

psal. 73.

*gust* in her upon discourseth excellent well: their impiety (saith he) is become as the  
 „ axe of God, they are made the instrument  
 „ of the angry, but not the kingdome of the  
 „ well pleased. God vsually doth, as we see  
 „ men to do. a man sometimes when he is  
 „ angry, will snatch vp some rod which lies  
 „ next at hand, perhaps some twig or o-  
 „ ther, with which he beats his sonne, and  
 „ afterwards casting his rod into the fier,  
 „ he doth reserue the inheritance for his  
 „ sonne: in the like manner God sometimes  
 „ by the euill, teacheth & amends the good:  
 „ by vsing them as instruments and scour-  
 „ ges of his wrath.

Hist. ecc.

p. 1. lib.

3. c. 11.

We read in the Ecclesiasticall History, that *Tisme* Generall of the Romaine army,

ne. army, fetching once a circuit about the  
ous walles of Hierusalem, which he then held  
ty besieged, and seeing the ditches all filled  
the with the dead corpes and carkasses of  
oly men, and all the neighbouring country,  
Tu infected with the horrible stench of the,  
ry, lifting vp his sorrowfull eyes to heauen,  
om to direct thither his lamentable voice he  
ans, cald God to witnesse for him, that he  
ose was no waies the cause of so great a  
Au slaughter and butchery of men. And also  
rell: when *Alaricus* was in his expedition to p. 2. li. 9.  
the sacke and ruine Rome, it is recorded that c. 2. hist.  
mēt a venerable auncient Monke, went to  
the meet him on his way, beseeching him  
the that he would not be the cause of such  
see great euills, as were imminent that day,  
ne is ouer that wretched Citty: vnto whom he  
lies answered, that he went towards Rome  
r o- out of no proper inclination of his owne;  
and but there is, said he, a certaine person,  
fier, which importuns me daily & euen seems  
his to hollow in mine eares, go to Rome, and  
mes distroy that Citty; And thus we see all  
bed: things are proceeding from the hand of  
our- God, and disposed according to his will  
ory, & ordinance. And so the Royal Prophet  
nine *David* whē *Semei*, reuiled and curst him,  
my, B throwing

throwing downe sand and stones against him, said vnto those who counsailed him for to reuenge himselſe; *The Lord hath* 2. Reg.  
16. 10. *commaunded him, to curse and reuile*  
*Dauid, and who shall dare to say, why*  
*bath he done so?* as much as to say, the  
Lord doth vse him as his instrument to  
punish and chastise me with all.

But what marueile ist, to acknowledge  
men, the instruments of Gods Iustice and  
diuine prouidence, since euen the Diuels  
are so, how euer otherwise obstinat and  
enhardned in their malice, and seeking  
nothing more then our perdition, S. Gre-  
gory notes it excellently well, vpon that  
Greg. li. 18, mo- place of the first booke of Kings, *Spiritus*  
ral. c. 3. *Domini malus arripiebat Saul the euill*  
1. Reg. *Spirit of the Lord did ceaze on Saul,* the  
16. 23. same spirit being called the spirit of the  
Lord, and also an euill spirit; euill (to wit)  
because of the desire of its mischieuous  
will; and of the Lord, for that he was sent  
by God, to afflict Saul with that plague  
and torment, which God by its meanes  
did execute vpon him, and so it is decla-  
red in the same text saying, *exagitabat*  
*eum spiritus nequam à Domino* the wic-  
ked spirit from the Lord, did torment and  
vexe

vexe him, and for this reason saith the saint, Greg. li.  
14. mor.  
c. 16.  
Iob, 19.  
12.  
doth the holy scripture call those diuells  
which torment and persecute the iust,  
the Thieues of God, Thieues because  
of the malicious will they haue, to  
hurt and damage vs, and of the Lord, to  
giue vs to vnderstand, that all the power  
they haue for to do any mischief, is de-  
riued vnto them from almighty God.  
And so *S. Augustin* obserues very well,  
that Iob did not say, *Dominus dedit, Dia-* Aug. in  
psal. 31.  
Iob. 1. 21  
*bolus abstulit*, the Lord hath giuen, and  
the Diuell hath taken away; but he attri-  
buts it all to almighty God, saying *the*  
*Lord hath giuen me, the Lord hath takē*  
*away*: knowing right well, that the Diuell  
could proceed no farther in hurting vs,  
then God permitted him. And this Saint  
prosecutes his discourse saying; acknow- Aug. in  
psal. 31.  
ledge God the Authour of thy scourge  
and punishment, seeing the Diuel can do,,  
thee no harme vnles he first permit it,,  
who hath all superiour power. Let no mā  
say this mischief is happened to me by  
the Diuells meanes, but attribut all your  
punishmēt & affliction to Almighty God:  
since the Diuell can do nothing of him-  
selfe, not so much as touch the least haire

Math. 8.  
31.

which lies vpon our garments, without the permission of God; neither could he enter into the heard of swine as the Euangell testifies, without hauing first obtained leaue of our Sauour *Christ*, to do it. how then shall he be able to tempt or indamage vs, without the permission of Almighty God? He who had no power to touch the swine, how shall he come to annoy the children?

### THE III. CHAPTER.

*Of the great good and profit, which is included in this Conformity with the will of God.*

**S** *Aint Basil* saysthat the height of all the sanctity and perfection of a Christian life, consists in attributing the causes of all things to God, how little or great so euer in themselves they be, and to conforme our selues in them vnto his holy will. But to the end that we may the better comprehend the importance and perfection thereof, and be incited by our affection towards it, to seeke and procure it with greater diligence; we will more particularly



particularly declare the great good and profit, which is contained in this conformity with the will of God. The first is that intire and perfect resignation, which the Saints and all Masters of spirituall life do extoll so much, pronouncing it the root and offspring of all our tranquility and peace, as being that whereby a man is wholly submitted and resigned into the hands of God, as a peece of clay into the Potters hands, to be fashioned and moulded as he pleases, without desiring to haue any interest longer in himselfe, neither to live, to eate, to sleepe, or labour for himselfe, but wholly and intirely for Almighty God: and this is effected by this conformity, seeing that man thereby resignes himselfe wholly vnto the will of God in such manner, as not to desire any thing; but only that the diuine will may be most perfectly accomplished in him; as well in point of what he is to do, as in all accidents which may happen to him, as well in prosperity and consolation, as in anxiety and aduersity. Which is a thing so gratefull and pleasing to Almighty God, as for this only reason, he stiled *Dauid* a man according to his owne harte. *Inueni*

1. Reg. *virum secundum cor meum, qui faciat*  
 13. 14. *omnes voluntates meas*, he hauing prepa-  
 Actuum red his hart so plyable and obedient to  
 13. 22. the hart of God, so readily wrought to a  
 delicate aptnes to receaue each forme  
 which he should please to impresse in  
 him, either of ioy and contentment or of  
 paine and griefe, as softned waxe was not  
 more supple to receaue the figure which a  
 man should imprint in it: and therefore  
 Psal 56. he said, and repeated it againe, *Paratum*  
 8. & Pla. *cor meum Deus, paratum cor meum*, my  
 107. 1. hart is prepared, o God, my hart is pre-  
 pared. Secondly he who hath this intire  
 and perfect conformity with the will of  
 God, must with all haue attained to an  
 intire and perfect mortification, of all his  
 passions, and vitious inclinations; We  
 are not ignorant how highly necessary  
 this mortification is, how much it is com-  
 mended and extolled in the sacred scrip-  
 ture and by the B. Saints. Now this mor-  
 tification is a meanes which of necessity  
 must precede the attaining of this con-  
 formity with the will of God, this being  
 the end, and mortification the meanes to  
 arriue vnto it; and we know the princi-  
 pall end of any thing, is vsually more sub-  
 lime

lime and perfect then the meanes. That mortification is a necessary meanes to attaine vnto this vnion, and intire and perfect conformity with the will of God, we may vnderstand by this, that there is nothing which lets and hinders this vnion and conformity, but only our proper wil, and disordinate appetits, and so consequently the more they shall be mortified and ouercome, the more deare and strait wilt this vnion be, and this conformity with the wil of God. For to ioyne a rough hewen planch, and make it ly euen with an other which is wel smoothed and plained, we must first passe it ouer with the plainer and make it euen; and so in like manner mortification goes perfecting & polishing vs, vntill it make vs fit to be ioyned to God, and applied in all things to his holy will, and therefore the farther we shall proceed in mortifying our selues, the nigher we shall come to vnite & conioyne our selues vnto the will of God, and when we shall once come to be perfectly mortified, we shal then haue attained vnto this perfect vnion and conformity.

From hence proceeds an other good and profit, which we may reckon for the

third; and that is, that this resignation and enrire conformity with the will of God, is on of the greatest, and most acceptable sacrifices, which any man of himselfe can offer to Almighty God. For as much as in other sacrifices, he offers only his goods; but in this, himselfe is offered vp: in other sacrifices and mortifications, he only mortifies himselfe in part, in temperance, modesty, silence or patience, he offers but a part and portion of himselfe; but in this a perfect holocaust, whereby he offers himselfe entirely and altogether to his Diuine Maiestie to be disposed of, in all things as he pleaseth, and when, and how he pleaseth, without any exceptiō, or any reseruatiō to himselfe; and therefore there is as much difference betwixt this sacrifice, and all other sacrifices and mortifications, as betwixt a man, and those goods which belong vnto him, or the whole of any thing, and any part thereof.

Prou 23.  
26.

And this God esteems so highly of, that he seems to require nothing els of vs, *Probe fili mi cor tuum mihi*, my sonne giue me thy harte; as the Royall Eagle seekes no other pray then harts, so  
the

the most gratefull and acceptable thing to God, is this hart of ours, and if you giue him not this, it is labour lost to present him with any thing besides, for he regards it not. Neither if we consider it well, is it so great a thing which he demaunds of vs, when he requires our harts; seeing that if we who are only dust and ashes, cannot be satiat or content, with all those thinges which God hath euer created, and that our caytiue narrow harts cannot be filled with any thing which is lesse then God, how can we thinke to giue God any satisfaction and content, in affording him but halfe our harts, reseruing the other halfe vnto our selues? wee are most grossly abused, if we thinke our harts can admit of any such diuision *coangustatum est enim stratum, ita vt alter decidat, & pallium brene virumque operire non potest*, the hart is a little and strait bed saith the Prophet *Esay*, and is capable of God alone, wherefore the spouse in the Canticles doth call it her little bed; *In lectulo meo, quasi per noctes quem diligit anima mea*, in my little bed I haue sought in the night him whom my soule dearly loues, and because

*Esay 28.  
20.*

Gilbert.  
Abbas  
ser. 2. in  
Cāt. ap.

Bernar-  
in-Cant.  
3. 1.

Esay. 57.  
8.

because shee kept her harte so straitned that no other could lodge in it, besides her be loued Bridgroom: and who soeuer should seeke to extend his hart so farre, as to make roome for any on besides, would chase God out of it. And it is of that, which his Diuine Maiestie makes complaint by the Prophet *Esay*, *quia iuxta me discooperuisti, & suscepisti Adulterum, dilatasti cubile tuum, & pepigisti cum eis fadus*, you haue committed Adultery by receauing into the bed of your hart, any other besides your spouse, and to cloke this your wickednes, you betray and driue God from you. If we had a thousand harts, we were bound to make tender of them all to God, and yet we were to conceit we had done too little, in regard of what we owe of duty vnto so great a Lord.

The fourth is, that whosoever shall haue brought himselfe to this conformity, will be possessed with the perfect charity and loue of God; and the farther progresse he makes in it, the greater and dearer will be his loue of God, and consequently his perfection, which consists in this perfect loue and charity, and besides

besides that which we haue already said,  
 may be farther gathered from that which  
 we are to cōclude with all; seing the loue  
 of God cōsists not in words, but in effects  
 and workes: *Probatio dilectionis* (saith  
*S. Gregory*) *exhibitio est operis*, the proofof  
 of our loue, is the tender of our workes;  
 & the more hard and painfull to accom-  
 plish those workes shall be, the more do  
 they declare our loue and affection: and  
 so the Apostle and Euangelist *S. Iohn*,  
 going about to declare the great loue  
 which God did beare vnto the world, as  
 also the greatnes of our B. Sauours loue  
 vnto his eternall Father: of the first he  
 says: *God so loued the world, as he gaue*  
*his only begotten sonne* to suffer and die  
 for vs; and for the second our B. Sauour  
 himselfe speaking saith: *that the world*  
*may know how I loue my Father, and that*  
*I doe according as my Father hath com-*  
*maunded me, rise and let vs goe hence, &*  
 the place to which he went, was to the  
 crosse, to suffer shame, torments & death  
 for vs. In which he made it sufficiently  
 appeare vnto the world, that he loued his  
 Father, in so much as he was obedient to  
 him in a commaund so hard and rigo-  
 rous,

Greg hō  
 in Euāg.

Ioan. 3.  
 16.

Ioan. 14

3.

rous. Wherefore we conclude that our loue appeares best in our Actions, and most, when they shall be most great and laborious. Moreouer this entire conformity with the will of God, is (as we haue said) the greatest sacrifice which of our selues we can offer vp vnto him; & that, because it supposes a most perfect mortification and resignation, whereby a man offers vp himselfe to God, and wholly resignes himselfe into his hands, to dispose of him, in what manner so euer he shall please, then the which there is nothing in which he can more shew his loue vnto him, seeing he freely giues and offers vp vnto his Diuine Maiestie what so euer he hath, as also what so euer he can haue or may desire, and that with a mind so liberally disposed, as could he, or had he more, with the same willingnes he would depart with it.

THE



THE IV. CHAPTER.

*That this perfect conformity with the wil  
of God, is a blessednes and a kind of  
heauen in earth.*

**W**Hosocuer shall be arriued to this  
entire conformity with the will  
of God receauing euey thing which may  
happen to him, as proceeding from the  
hand of God, and conforming himselve  
in all, vnto his most diuine and holy will,  
shall haue obtained here on earth a rare  
felicity and beatitude, and enioy a won-  
drous great tranquility and peace, with a  
perpetuall ioy and iubily of mind. Which  
is that blessednes and felicity which God  
Almighties great and faithfull seruāts en-  
ioy in this mortall life, for (as the Apo-  
stle says) *the Kingdom of God* (and the  
beatitude of this life) *is not meate and* Ad Rō.  
*drinke* (nor any other sensuall delight 17. 14  
and pleasure) *but Iustice peace and ioy in*  
*the Holy Ghost*, this is the kingdom of  
heauen on earth, and that Paradice of all  
delights which we may enioy in this life,  
and which with good reason is called a  
beati-

beatitude, since it resembles vs in a certaine proportion, vnto the blessed in heauen: for as in heauen aboue, there is no change nor alteration, but the blessed perseuer alwaies in one being, in the eternall fruition of Almighty God; so also they who are once arriued to this intire and perfect conformity to that, place all their contentment, in the contentment and the will of God, are neuer troubled nor disquieted with any mutation or contrary accident of this present life; in that their harts and wils are so sweetly vnited and conformed vnto the will of God, that the consideration how all is proceeding from him, and how his good will and pleasure is fulfilled in all, makes that pleasing and delightfull to them, which otherwise would be grievous and sorrowfull. and that, because they desire and loue more the will of their beloued then their owne. Whence it comes that nothing is able to disturbe their peace: for they reioyce and are particularly glad, when they are afflicted, grieued, and despised, as knowing it proceeding from the hand of God, and there is nothing els, which can disquiet them, or bereaue them of  
the

the peace and tranquillity of their minds.

And this was the cause of that perpetuall cheerfulness and peace. which those holy Saints, (whom we admire in story) *S. Anthony, Dominicke, Francis*, and others enjoyed, as also of that which we read of our B. Father *Ignatius*, and ordinarily see in other great servants of Almighty God. For do we thinke that these holy Saints had no aduersity? that they had not tentations, and infirmities like vs? that they were neuer crossed with the successe of thinges? without doubt they were, and that farre more then we: for as much as God vses most frequently to try his Saintes, and exercise them in the like accidents. whence therefore comes it, that they remained euer in one state of mind, without any chaunge of countenance, but with a ioy and serenity both in the interior and exterior, so great, as if they had kept perpetuall feast and iubily? The cause was no other then that which we haue already declared, because they were arrived to that degree of perfection, to haue intire conformity with the will of God, and had placed all their delight in the accomplishment thereof, and so the successe

Lib. 5. c.  
5. vitæ.  
P. N. Ignatij.

successse of euery thing, was their felicity;

Ad Rō.

S. 28.

Mach. 1

21.

*Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum, non contristabit iustum quic-*

*quid ei acciderit,* all labours, tentations &

mortifications were conuerted into a delight to them, since they acknowledged

in them the blessed will of God which

was all there ioy and contentment. They

had already attained vnto the greatest

height of felicity & beatitude, which any

on could arriue to in this mortall life, and

so proceeded in all their actions as if they

had been in possessiō of the glory of hea-

uen. Herupon *S. Catherine of Siena* said

Sancta

Cathari.

de Sien.

en ses

dialogos

excellently wel, that the iust in this world

are like our Sauour *Christ*, who neuer

wanted the beatitude of his soule, how

euer great his paines and afflictions were.

So likewise the iust doe neuer loose that

their felicity, which consists in the conform-

ity with the will of God, with how

many aduersities so euer they be oppressed.

Seing that there remaines with them still

that ioy & contentment which they take

in the will of God which is accomplisht

in them.

This is a perfection so sublime and of so high prerogatiue, as the Apostle auouches

it

it to passe all vnderstanding; *Et pax Dei* Ad Phi:  
*qua exsuperat omnem sensum, custodiat* lip. 4. 7a  
*corda vestra, & intelligentias vestras in*  
*Christo Iesu*, he calls it a peace surpassing  
all vnderstanding, for as much as it is a  
gift of God so high and supernaturall,  
that no humaine vnderstanding by it  
selfe, can comprehend how it is possible  
for a hart of flesh and blood, to remaine  
quiet, at peace, and comforted, in the  
middle of those stormes and tempests  
raised by the miseries and tentations of  
this life; This was notwithstanding to be  
found, in that wondrous bushe which  
Moyse saw, all burning in a flame, and <sup>Exod. 3<sup>d</sup></sup>  
yet not consumed, as also in that Mira-  
cle of the Children, who at *Babylon*  
throwne into the fiery furnace, remained  
vntoucht in the midst of such a mighty  
fier, singing praises vnto God. This is that  
which holy *Iob* mentioned in speaking  
vnto God, *mirabiliter me crucies*. O <sup>Iob. 16<sup>d</sup></sup>  
Lord thou dost torment me after a won-  
derous manner, signifying the great paine  
and torment which on the one side he  
suffred, and on the other the vnspeakeable  
contentment and ioy, which he receaued  
in the sustaining them, seing that such

C

was

was the good will and pleasure of his Diuine Maieſty.

*Cassian* writs of a certaine venerable man, who at *Alexandria*, was incompaſt and hemd in by a ſort of lewd Infidells, who reuiled him with all the iniurious ſpeeches as they could deuife; in the meane time he remained in the middle of them, like a ſilly lambe, ſuſtaining all, and anſwering not a word: they all made their ſport with him, ſtriking and ſhouting him; & doing him a thouſand other iniuries; among the reſt one demaunded of him in mockery, what miracles his *Chriſt* had done? vnto whom he anſwered the miracles which he hath done are, that I in ſuffering all theſe iniuries, and as many more as you can all inuent, do take all patiently, and am neither moued to anger againſt you, nor ſtired vp to paſſion in my ſelfe. This doubtles was a great miracle and wonder, and in him a moſt high, and gainfull perfection.

Aug. lib.  
de Gen.  
ad lit in  
opere  
imper  
ſect. c. 13

The Antients do recount, and *S. Au-  
guſtin* makes mention of it in diuers trea-  
tiſes, how that mountaine of Macedonia  
called *Olympus* is of ſuch a eminēt height  
that to the top of it the wind and raine  
and

and clouds haue no access; *Nubes excedit Olympus*; neither can it be reached by the flight of any bird, it being so high that it transcends the first and extends it selfe vnto the middle region of the aire; wherefore the aire is there so pure and rarified as the clouds can neither be formed nor sustained there, they requiring vnto their being, a thicker and grosser aire: and for the same reason neither the birds nor men can be maintained there in life, because the aire is so subtile and rarified, as it is not fit to take breath or respire with all; And thus much we haue from the relation of those, who went euery yeare vp to the top to offer certaine sacrifices, carrying with them wett sponges, vnto the end that applying them vnto their noses, they might condense the aire, and make it fit for respiration: where if they chaunced at any time to write in the ashes of the sacrifice, they should find the next yeare the Character as entire and perfect, as when they drew it first, which was a signe that neither the wind nor raine had any power there. Behold here that height of perfection liuely disciphered, vnto which those are arriued, who haue ac-

contra  
Mani-  
cheos.  
cap. 15.  
Lucam.  
1, 2. phar-  
salica.

quired this entire conformity with the will of God. *Nubes excedit Olympus, & pacem summa tenent*, vnto such a glorious height haue they attained, vnto such a happy peace are they arriued aboue all annoiance either of cloud, swind, or raine, where no fowle of rapin can come, to bercaue them of their peace and pleasure of hart.

*S. Augustin* on these words; *Beati pacifici quoniam filij Dei vocabuntur*, says that our Sauour *Christ* hath therefore pronounced the *peaceable blessed and children of God*, because there is nothing in them which resists and contradicts the will of God, but they conformē themselves vnto it in euery thing, like vnto good children, who procure in euery thing to imitate their Father, in both willing and not willing the same with him in euery thing.

Aug. li.  
1. de ser.  
Dom. in  
monte  
cap. 8.  
Mat. 5 9.

And this is a point the most spirituall and of greatest importance of all others in spirituall life. And whosoever shall be arriued to this to receaue all that comes, how euer small or great, as proceeding from the holy hand of God, and conforme himselfe in all vnto his soueraigne will,



will, so as to haue no other contentment  
 but the good pleasure of God, and the  
 performance of his holy will, this man  
 hath found a Paradise here on earth, *fa-*  
*ctus est in pace locus eius, & habitatio* Psal. 75.  
*eius in Sion*, and as *S. Bernard* says. may 3. Bern.  
 sing which all assurance and confidence in sentē-  
 this Canticle of the wiseman, *I haue* tijs & eel.  
*sought in all these rest and shall make my* 24. 11.  
*aboad in the inheritance of the Lord:*  
 seing that there he hath incountred with  
 that true solace, & full and perfect plea-  
 sures, which no liuing creature can be-  
 reauē him of, *ut gaudium vestrum sit*  
*plenum, & gaudium vestrum nemo tollat* Ioan. 16.  
*a vobis.* O that we could but once attaine 22. & 24.  
 to this, that all delight might be in the  
 accomplishment of the will of God, in  
 such manner as our will might be his and  
 his contentment ours! O Lord that I had  
 no other will, then what your blessed  
 will is, nor any lesse desire of any thing,  
 but what I knew would be yngratfull to  
 you, and that your good pleasure, might  
 be my ioy and comfort in euery thing.  
*Mihi autem adherere Deo bonum est,* Psal. 72.  
*ponere in Domino meo spem meam,* it is 23.  
 good, (it is best) for me to adhere to God,

and to place *my* hope in the Lord. Oh how happy should my soule be, to be conioyned to God in such a louing manner! Oh how blessed should wee be to be alwaies vnited with him, to make no account of ought we do or suffer, but so fare forth as we are therein performing the will of God; and from thence receauing al our satisfaction and content!

Thomas  
de Kem-  
pis li. 1.  
de con-  
templ.  
mundi.  
c. 3.

*he (says that all-holy man) vnto whom all things are one, who draweth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may enioy a quiet mind, and remaine peaceable in God.*

## THE V. CHAPTER.

*That contentment is only in God, and  
whosoever seeketh in it anything els,  
shall neuer find it.*

**T**Hose who place their contentment in God and in his diuine will, do enioy a perpetuall quiet and repose, in that being fastned to that firme pillar of the will of God, they partake of its immutability, and abide allwaies in one state, immobile and firm: whereas those  
who

who haue any tye or obligation to the world, and haue placed their harts and contentments thereupon, can neuer enioy any true or lasting peace, since they are subiect to the chaunges of those things vpon which they do rely, and together with them are tost and whirled about. S.

*Augustin* doth declare this admirably well, vpon that verse of the Prophet, *concepit dolorem & peperit iniquitatem.* Aug. in in psal. 7. 15.

They haue conceiued dolor and brought forth iniquity, saying; *non enim poterit labor finire, nisi hoc quisque diligat quod inuito non poterit auferri*, there would be no end of griefe and affliction, vntill we came to place our affection vpon that, which against our wils could not be také from vs. For be assured that you shall be alwaies in trouble and disquieted, as long as you affect those things, which are in others powers to bereaue you of.

We read of our B. Father *Francis* Lib. 1 c. 7 vita P. *Borgia* how he hauing conducted the herse of the dead Empreſſe to *Granada*, N de *Borgia*, where before shee could be interred, he was inforc't for the securing of his conscience and oath, to disclose the coffin to be able to affirme whether it were she or

no, that he vneuyling her face, & seeing it so vgly and horribly deformed, as was enough to stricke affrightment into those who saw it, was so liuely moued therewith God at the same instant visiting his hart and storing it with light to see the deceits and vanity of the world, that it conceived a firme purpose which in these words he exprest, *I vow vnto thee, o my God, I will neuer serue any prince who can dye againe.* Let vs likewise put on the same resolution & oblige our selues to God, to bestow our harts hereafter vpon no mortall thing; nor ought which may haue end, or which others can bereaue vs of against our wills: which vnles we do, we shall neuer be at rest nor quietnes. for when those things are loued (saith *S. Augustin*) which we may loose, whether we will or no, we must necessarily remaine miserably troubled, & afflicted for them it is naturall vnto vs, not to depart with that without griefe, which we loued whilst we enioyed, and the greater our loue was vnto it, whilst we possesse it, the greater is our griefe when we are bereaued of it, and in confirmation of this in another place he saith, *Qui vult gaudere de se,*

Aug. tra.  
24. super  
Ioan.

*se, tristis erit.* If you place your contentment, in such an office or such an employment, or are too much affected to any place, or the like, it lies in your superiours power at pleasure to depriue you of this content; and so you will neuer liue a contented life: if you take delight in exterior things, or in the satisfying of your owne desire, all things of this kind are subiect vnto chaunge; and although they should remaine in the same state they are, yet you your selfe would be altered, and be displeased with that to morrow, which but today you passionatly affected; Of this the Children of Israell afford vs an exāple, who when they fed vpon Manna, were cloyed with it, and demaunded other meat, when they saw themselues at liberty, began presently to loue and desire their former bondage, their wishes euen in sighes, did carry them backe to *Egypt* againe, they longed for their fare of onions and garlick to which they had been accustomed, and their supplication to returne did euen proceed to importunity. you will neuer find content, if you place it in any of these exterior things, *qui autem de Deo vult gaudere semper*

*semper gaudebit, quia Deus sempiternus est*; but he who will reioyce in God, and in the performance of his holy will, shall haue perpetuall cause for to reioyce, since God is eternall and aboue all chaunge and mutation, *vis habere gaudium sempiternum* (saith this Saint) *adhare illi qui sempiternus est*, would you haue a ioy and contentment which should alwaies last, adheare vnto God and set your hart on him, who neuer hath an end.

Eccles.  
37. 12,

The holy Ghost, doth put this difference betwixt a foolish man, and one who is wise and holy, *stultus sicut Luna mutatur, homo sanctus in sapientia manet sicut Sol*. The ignorant chaunges like the Moone, which to day is in increase, to morrow in the wain, to day you shall see him iocant and merry, to morrow sad and melācholy, now in one humour presently in an other, and this because he hath fastned his hart and placed his contentment in the things of the world, which are still fading, and euer mutable; wherfore (like as they say) he daunceth after the musicke which they make, and his chaunges are according to their inconstancy. In a word he is lunaticke and like the sea dependent

dent on the alteration of the moone; but a iust and holy man, remaines alwaies in one state and being like the Sunne, hath no increase nor wain. The true seruant of Almighty God, in all his proceedings is cheerfull and content, he hath placed all his felicity in God, and in the accomplishment of his holy will, which can neuer faile him, nor any creature euer be-  
reave him of it.

It is reported of that holy Abbot called *Deicola*, that his countenance was alwaies composed to smile, and being demaunded the reason, he answered; *Christum à me tollere nemo potest*: happen what may, come whatsoeuer will, there is no man can depriue me of *Christ*. This holy man had found out perfect and true contentment, since he sought it in him, who could not be wanting to him, nor taken away from him by any one; whom if we will be happy we must imitate. *Exultate* Ps 12. 1.  
*iusti in Domino* reioyce ye iust in the Basilius.  
Lord. *S. Basil* writing vpon these words obserues, that the Prophet says not, that you should reioyce in the abundance of your temporall goods, neither in any ability, learning, or talent which you haue;  
not

not in your health or ablenes of body;  
not in the praise and the esteeme of men;  
but that al your delight should be in God,  
in the fulfilling of his blessed will, for  
this is it alone which is sufficient to satiate  
and content vs, all other things hauing  
no perfect nor true contentment in them.

Bernar.  
Mat. 19.  
27.

*S. Bernard* in one of his sermons vpon  
these words of *S. Peter*, *ecce nos reliqui-*  
*mus omnia &c.* goes declaring of it rarely  
well saying *anima rationalis ceteris om-*  
*nibus occupari potest, repleti non potest*  
all other things, besides God, may possesse  
the hart and soule of man, but satiate them  
they cannot, they may prouoke, and set  
their appetits on edge, but cannot satisfy  
nor take them downe, *Auarus non im-*  
*plebitur pecunia*. Like as the auaricious  
(says the wiseman) hath a great thirst of  
gold; but all which he possesseth can ne-  
uer allay nor quench it: so fares it with  
the things of this world, which can neuer  
sate our soules and appetits. And *S. Ber-*  
*nard* giues vs the reason, do you know  
*Ber. tra.* (saith he) why all the things and riches  
*de dilig.* of the world can neuer satisfy you? *Quia*  
*Deo c.* *non sunt naturales cibi animæ*: since they  
*in fine.* are not the naturall food of our soules;

no



no more then aire and wind, the sustenance of our bodies: and as we should laugh, and hold him for a foole who being ready to die for hunger would by yawning to receaue the ayre, and Cameleon-like thinke to nourish himselfe with it: so (says this Saint) is it no lesse a folly, to thinke of the reasonable soule of man, which is a spirit, can be satiat with these temporall and sensuall things. *Inflari potest, satiari non potest*, it may be puffed vp, like that other with ayre, but it is impossible it should be satiat with it; since it is a food which hath no proportion to it, giue to each on its requisit sustenance corporall food to the body, and spirituall to the soule; *Panis namque anima, iustitia est*; & *soli beati qui esuriunt illam*, Bern su. *quoniam illi saturabuntur*, the bread and illa verba. Ecce nos reliquimus] naturall nourishment of the soule, is Iustice and vertue, and they are only happy quimus] because they hunger and thirst after this Iustice, omnia.

S. Augustin in his Soliloquies declaring this reason more amply, speaking of Aug. c. cap 30. the reasonable soule saith. *Facta est capax soliloq.* *maiestatis tue ut à te solo, & nullo alio possit impleri*, you haue made our soules, ô Lord

ô Lord, capable of your diuine Maieſty, in ſuch manner as nothing can ſatisfy or fill them but your ſelfe. When the chace or goldworke of a Iewell is made peculiarly for any pretious ſtone, there is nothing els which can compleatly fill it, beſides that ſtone for which it was prepared: as for example the gold indented in a triangular forme, any Iewel which were round would neuer fit it: in like manner our ſoule is created to the Image & likenes of the bleſſed Trinity, and proportioned and made to receiue nothing els but God, and therefore it is impoſſible that any thing beſides God can ſuffice to fill it. Al whatſoeuer is contained in this round vniuerſe, is not able to doe it; *Feciſti nos Domine ad te, & inquietum eſt cor noſtrum donec requieſcat in te*, you haue made vs, ô Lord, for your ſelfe, and our hart enioys no quiet vntill it reſt in you.

Aug. l. i.  
conſe.  
c. i.

That common cōpariſon of the needle of a dyall, doth aptly ſerue for to declare this better: the nature of this needle (being once toucht with the loadſtone) is, by a naturall inſtinct from God Almighty to point ſtill towards the North, and you ſhall ſee it alwaies in an vnquiet motion,  
and

*with the will of God.* Chap. 5. 47  
and neuer resting vntill the point of  
it hath reacht the North, when in-  
stantly it stands quiet and immoueable.  
In this manner hath God created man;  
with such a naturall reference and incli-  
nation vnto him, as to his North & finall  
end, that vntill we haue placed our harts  
on God, we shall like this needle, be ne-  
uer at rest nor quiet; This needle, as long  
as it regards any point of the heauens  
which is in motion, neuer finds rest, but  
when it lights vpon the North pole,  
which remaines euer fixt and immouea-  
ble, is straight at quiet, and stands still:  
so, as long as we fixe our eyes and harts  
on these worldly things which decay and  
perish, we shall neuer find contentment  
or repose; if we place them on God, we  
are instantly at rest.

And this ought to be a great motiue  
vnto vs to seeke Almighty God, euen for  
our owne sakes and interest, since there  
is no man, who desires not to liue con-  
tent. *S. Augustin* says *scimus fratres*  
*quod omnis homo, gaudere desiderat; sed* Aug. set.  
*non omnes ibi quarunt gaudium, ubi oportet* 30. de  
*inquiri.* We know, my deare brothers, Sanctis.  
that all men do naturally desire comfort  
and

and content, and seeke after it with all their harts diligence, by reason they cannot liue without it; but all men do not seeke it there, where they ought to do, & all the felicity or infelicity of man consists in the placing hls hart and eyes vpon a true content, or vpon a false and deceitfull on; The Auaricious, the Luxurious, the Proud, the Ambitious, and the Gluttonous man, seeke their contentment and satisfaction all; but the one seekes it in hording vp riches, the other in pursuit of honour and dignity, the one in feasting, the other in luxuriousnes, and all in taking their marks amisse, and seeking it where it is not to be found, goe on the way neuer to arriue vnto it: seeing that all these things, and as many more as are in the world, are not sufficient to satisfy a soule, and put it in a state of true felicity. And therefore says this glorious Saint. *Quid*

Aug. de  
spirit. &  
anima.

cap. 54.

*ergo per multa vagaris homuncio querendo bona anime tue, & corporis tui? Ama unum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona; & sufficit: desiderata simplex bonum, quod est omne bonum; & satis est, why dost thou raunge abroad silly man, seeking good for thy soule and body out of this variety*

*with the will of God.* Chap. 5. 49

variety of (worldly) things? loue (God) „  
that only good, in whom all other goods „  
are comprehended; and it suffices: desire „  
that good without all mixture good „  
which is all and folly good; & it is inough. „  
It is he alone who can satiate and fulfil the  
desires of our hearts. *Benedic anima mea*  
*Dominum, qui replet in bonis desiderium* Psal. 102:  
*tuum*; may he be prayſed bleſt and glori- 3:  
fied for all eternity. *Amen.*

## THE VI. CHAPTER.

*Wherein is in an other manner declared,  
how the only way to arrive to true con-  
tentment, is to conforme our ſelues  
with the will of God.*

**T**He glorious *S. Auguſtin*, writing *Aug. tra.*  
vpon theſe words of our B. Sa- *73. ſup.*  
uiour (*Quodcumque petieritis patrem in* *vcan.*  
*nomine meo, hoc faciam*; whatſoeuer *Ioan. 14.*  
you demaund of my Father in my name, *15.*  
I will graunt it you) ſays that no man is  
to ſeek for reſt and peace, by way of  
doing his owne will, and obtaining that  
which he deſires; ſeing it is neither good  
nor conuenient for him, and may fall out  
perhaps vnto his hurt and ruine: but that

D

he

he is to be resigned, to imbrace willingly whatsoeuer good or better thing God shall allot vnto him; and for this only he is to beseech and petition Almighty God. *Quando enim nos delectat mala, & non delectat bona, rogare debemus potius Deum, ut delectent bona, quam ut concedantur mala,* when we find our selues no waies affected, to the performance of the will of God, which is the only good, but are strögly carried away with the desire that our owne wills be done; we ought to make it our petition vnto God, not to graunt vs that which we desire; but to giue vs a tast and sweetnes, in the performance of his will which is our good, and most conuenient for vs. and he alleadges for this purpose that which is recorded of the children of *Israel*, in the booke of Numbers, who becoming weary & euen loathed with the *Manna* which God shoured them downe from heauen, desired and begged of God to send the flesh to eate, vnto whose desires he condescended, though much vnto their cost: for,

*Adhuc esca eorum in ore ipsorum, & ira Dei ascendit super eos, & occidit pingues eorum, & electos Israel impediuit,* as yet the

Num. 11

4.

Psal. 77.

30.

the meat was in their mouths & the wrath of God ascended vpon them, the best pampered of them were slaine, and the elect of *Israell*, were (mightily) hindered, God punished them with a grieuous masaker; It is most certaine that that heauenly Māna, which God sent vnto them, was farre better, thē that flesh which they desired, and those onions and Garlicke of *Egypt*, after which they lōged so much; and therfore they ought not to haue demanded it of God, but rather that he would haue rectified their pallat, that they might haue found gust and sauour in that heauenly foode; and then there had been no necessity for them, to wish for other food, since euery one might haue found in *Manna* that tast which he liked best. And euen so, when you lye vnder the arrest of any passion or temptation, and haue your tast so much depraued, as to find no sweetnes in vertue, no sauour in any good, but doe lye wishing, like a sicke and diseased man, for that which may be hurtfull and preiudiciall to you, you are not then to gouerne your selfe according to your owne desire, neither to desire to haue your will accom-

Sap. 16.  
20.

plisht, since this were no way to giue you any cōfort, but to sow the seeds of a greater trouble & disquietnes: but that which in such a circumstance you are to desire of God, is that he would salue and heale your pallat, and giue you tast and sweetnes in the accomplishing of this blessed will, which is our good, and most conuenient for vs; and so we shall come to obtaine a true peace and content of mind.

*S. Dorotheus* directs vs to it by another way, or rather declares this in another manner: he says, that he who in euery thing conformes himselfe vnto the will of God, in such manner, as to make all his owne inclinations readily serue vnto it, is come vnto such a passe as to doe hls owne will in euery thing, and to enjoy a perpetuall gladnes and quietnes of mind. To declare that which we would procure to say, we will giue an example of this in point of obedience, and make but one labour in dispatch of two affaires. We say commonly to those who desire to enter into Religion, and to make their liues iourney by the way of obedience; you must make account when you are entred into Religion, neuer more to doe your  
owne

Doroth.  
doctrina  
9.



owne will againe: and S. *Dorotheus* says  
on the cōtrary neuer feare it, you may do  
your owne will, & that not only lawfully  
but also holily, & with much perfection.  
How is this to be done? *Qui propriam nō  
habet voluntatē, suam ipsius semper facit  
voluntatem*: that Religious man who is  
truly obedient, and hath no selfe will of  
his owne, doth alwaies his owne will; be-  
cause he makes the will of an other his.  
*Et sic nolentes propriam explere volun-  
tatem, inuenimur illam semper exple-  
uisse*, do but procure, that your owne will  
be the same with the Superiours, and you  
will be doing your owne wil continually,  
and that with much merit & perfection.  
And so in conformity to this, I sleepe as  
much as I will, because I desire not to  
sleepe longer then obedience appoints; I  
eate as much as I desire, seeing I require  
no more, then that which is allotted vn-  
to me; I pray, I read, I labour as much as  
I please, and take vpon me as much pen-  
nance as I thinke is necessary for me, since  
I do all these, and in like manner all the  
rest, according to the prescript and will of  
holy obedience. And in this manner a  
good Religious man, without hauing

any inclination of his owne, comes to do his owne will continually. And this is it which makes those Religious, who are good indeed, appeare so cheerfull & ioyfully disposed; for that which renders them alwaies content and glad, is the making the will of obedience their owne.

In this point of obedience consists all the facility, and difficulty of Religious life, and on this depends the ioy and content of a Religious man. If you put but on a resolution, to renounce your owne will, and receaue the will of your Superiour in the place of it, the Religion will be easy and sweet vnto you, and you will liue in it with much content and ioy; but if you nourish a will contrary to the will of your Superiour, there is no liuing in Religion for you. two different wills in one person are incompatible; We see by experience although our will be but one, yet when our sensuall appetit is repugnant vnto reason and to it, how little assurance, and how little rest we haue; and yet this appetit is but an inferiour & subordinate to our will: but what shall we thinke when two equall wils, are struiuing in vs for superiority? *Nemo potest duobus*  
Domi-

*Dominis seruire*, no man can serue two Masters . Now for as much as the difficulty which occurs in Religious life, doth not consist in the exercises and labours themselves, but in the repugnance of our will, and in the apprehension which our imagination frames of them; thence it is, that we sometimes find its obseruances more difficult and insupportable. This we may easily apprehend from the difference, which we experience in our selves, when we are in temptation, and when we are free from it: for when we are without temptation, all things seeme light and easy to vs; but when we are assaulted with temptation, or subiected to any griefe or melancholy, that which was wont for to be easy to vs, is straight conuerted into difficulty, and we thinke we shall neuer be able to go through it, but that heauen & earth are come together againe, all as it were conspiring to bring vs difficulty. The difficulty is not in the thing it selfe, since it is no other then what it was before; but in our ill disposition of mind. As when a sick man hath an auersion from his meat, the fault is not in the meat, which is good and sauourly; but in the peccant humour

of the sicke, which makes his food seeme vnfaoury and disgustfull to him : and it is the like in that which we indeauour to say.

And this is the grace and fauour which God doth to those whom he calls vnto Religion, to make it sweet vnto them to follow an others will. This is the grace of our vocation, with which our God hath preuented vs, with a happines by farre transcending theirs, whom we haue left behind vs in the world. For what is it, that affords and giues you this facility, in leauing your owne, and following of an others? who hath plac't in your bosom that new hart, where with you haue in horroure all worldly things, and find so much sweetnes in recollection. prayer, & mortifying your selfe? you brought it not out of the world with you no certainly; but rather a contrary one, *se-*

Gen. 8. *sus enim, & cogitatio humani cordis, in*  
21. *malum prone sunt ab adolescentia sua.* It is a gift and fauour of the holy Ghost, who like a deare Mother of ours, hath rubbed with aloes and wormwood the treacherous nipples of the world, to wean vs from them, and make them seeme bitter,

ter, which nnce wee delicious to vs; and Ambro.  
honyed the exercises of vertue and Reli- psal. 118  
gion, that they might become sweet and oston 4.  
sauoury vnto vs, which before seemed lud. A-  
bitter, and vnsauoury. *Domine qui me uerte o-*  
*custodisti ab infantia, quia abstulisti à culos*  
*me amorem seculi. O blessed Lord (said meos ne*  
*holy S. Agatha) I render infinite thanks vanitatē!*  
vnto that deare goodnes of thine which S. Agath  
hath elect-ed, and defended me euen from  
mine infancy, and taken away from me  
all loue of this wretched world. We are  
not to thinke it so great a matter to be  
Religious, but it is much, and a great be-  
nefit of Almighty God, together with  
our vocation to Religio to giue vs a right  
tast and relish of this heauenly *Manna*,  
whilst others pallats are longing after the  
base sustenance of the garlicke & onions  
of Egypt.

I cōsider somtimes with my selfe, how  
worldly people, euen from the Lords and  
Noblemen in Court, vnto the Grooms  
and Footboys of the stable depart with  
the freedome of their owne wils for their  
particular profit and interest, and put on  
the seruill liuery of an other mans; they  
eat (as is commonly said) according to  
the

1. Cor.  
9. 25.

the rate of an others hunger, their sleepe is measured by an others watchfulness, and they so aptly cloathe and fit themselves with others wills, as it comes to be in only fashion with them, and they desire no other life then it. *Et illi quidem ut corruptibilem coronam accipiant; nos autem incorruptam.* What marueile is it, if we can be delighted and content, with that manner of regular liuing, which is prescribed vs in Religion, and resigne our selues vnto that better wil of our Superior; since they for a little honour and temporall interest, so accommodate themselves vnto the wills of others, as it is euen their delight and pleasure for to follow them, whilst they make night of day, and day of night. What great wonder is it, I say, if we performe as much for the loue of God, and for the purchassing of an eternall life? Let vs therfore put on a resolution to make the will of the Superiour our owne; and in this manner we shall do our owne wils in euery thing, & lead a life in Religion full of all sweetnes and cheerfulness, with a ioy and contentment most perfect and spirituall.

But now to returne vnto our argument,

ment, and apply all this vnto our present  
subiect; We are to procure to make the  
will of Almighty God our owne, & con-  
forme our selues vnto it in euery thing,  
and to wil or not will the same with him  
in euery thing; and so you will come, to  
do your owne will continually, and lead  
a life full of all content and satisfaction;  
For it is most eident, that if you desire  
nothing els, but what God Almighty  
would, your owne will shall alwaies be  
fulfilled: for his will shall be done, and  
consequently that which you desire. This  
verity euen *Seneca* was not ignorant of;  
who saith, that man hath nothing more  
high or perfect, thē the knowledge how  
to suffer with alacrity all paine and mi-  
sery, and sustaine all, as if they were pro-  
cured by his owne choice and election:  
and euen this much man is obliged to  
do, since he knowes it to be the will of  
God, that it should be so. Oh how happy  
should we liue, were we but arriued to  
that perfection, to make the will of God  
our owne, and to bound our desires with  
in the limits thereof! and this not only  
because by this meanes our will should  
be fulfilled; but most of all, because we  
should

*Seneca*  
in prefa-  
tione li.  
3. nat.  
quæst.

should see the will of God accomplisht in euery thing. whom we do loue so deare and tenderly. For although we ought to helpe our selues with that which hath been hitherto said; yet we are not to set vp our rest, vntill we are arriued to place all our comfort in delighting Almighty God. and in the fulfilling of his holy wil;

*Psal. 34. Omnia quaecunque voluit Dominus fecit,*  
6. *in calo, & in terra, in mari, & in omni-*

*buss abyssis*, God hath done whatsoeuer he pleased, in heauen and in earth, in the sea. and in all the deeps; he both can, and wil do all that he pleases, as the Wiseman

*Sap. 12. subest enim tibi cum volueris posse,*  
13 & there is nothing which can let or hin-

*Eccl. 13. der him. In ditione enim tua, cuncta sunt*

9 *posita, & non est qui possit resistere eius vo-*  
Ad Ro. *luntati. Voluntati eius quis resistet?*  
9. 19.

## THE VII. CHAPTER.

*Of diuers other felicities & profits which  
are to be found in this conformity  
with the will of God.*

**A**N other great good and profit in this exercise is, that this intire conformity with the will of God, is one of  
the



the best and principall dispositions, which  
on our parts we can be prepared with al  
to the receauing and in a manner inui-  
ting our blessed Lord to bestow his plen-  
tious graces and benefits vpon vs. And so  
when God had resolved to make *S. Paul*  
of a persecutour, an Apostle and Prea-  
cher of his sauing truth, he preuented and  
disposed him by this resignation. ayming  
at him a great light from heauen, which  
strucke him from his horse and opened  
the eyes of his soule in the fall, inforcing  
him to cry out: *Domine quid me vis fa-*  
*cere?* Lord what would you haue me  
doe? behould me heer as a little piece of  
clay betwixt your hands, mould me and  
fashio me to, what shape you please, wher-  
upon God made him a vessel of election,  
which might carry and diffuse his name  
through all the world; *Vas electionis est*  
*mihi, ut portet nomen meum coram gen-*  
*tibus & regibus & filiis Israel.* We read  
of *S. Gertrude* that God said vnto her:  
Whosoever desires that I should make  
free repaire vnto them, must deliuer o-  
uer vnto me the key of their owne will,  
without euer requiring it againe: & ther-  
fore our B. Father comends this resigna-  
tion

*Actu 9.6*

*Act. 9.13*

*S. Gertr.*  
*refert.*  
*Blo cap.*  
*11. mo-*  
*nir, (pir.*

**P. N. Ig-** tion and indifferēce vnto vs, as one of  
**natus li.** the best dispositions which we can haue  
**ex 5. spi.** to the receauing of Gods most exquisit  
 fauours: and he requires that we should  
 enter with it into the spirituall exercise,  
 and he lais vs this foundation euen from  
 the begining of them, that we should be  
 indifferēt, seuered frō all worldly things,  
 with affection no more inclining to one  
 thing then an other, but only desiring  
 that Gods blessed will should be accom-  
 plisht and done in euery thing; and in  
 those rules or annotatiōs which he giues,  
 aswell for the directiō of him who giues,  
 as him who takes the exercise, he says in  
 the fifth of them. It will be of incredible  
 „ helpe vnto him who takes these exerci-  
 „ ses, if coming with a great and liberall  
 „ mind he offer vp himselfe wholly vnto  
 „ his Creator to dispose of him, and euery  
 „ thing of his, according to his best plea-  
 sure, and in such manner as he may be best  
 serued by him. And the reason why this  
 same disposition, is of so great force to  
 obtaine any fauour & grace of Almighty  
 God, is because on the one side we rid  
 our selues of all the lets and hinderances  
 of our depraued affections and desires;  
 and

and on the other the more confidence we haue in God, and the more freely and intirely we resigne our selues into his hands, in desiring nothing but what may be best pleasing to him, the more we oblige him, to take vpon him the care of vs, and to be present with vs in all our necessities.

On the other side this Conformity with the will of God, is a most efficacious meanes to attaine vnto all vertue, seeing that vertues are not acquired but by the actes of them. This is the naturall meanes to attaine the habits of things; and by this way God Almighty intends to bestow vertue one vs, whose pleasure it is to produce the workes of grace, in a manner conformable vnto those of nature. Exercise your selfe then in this resignation and conformity with the will of God, and so you shall be continually in the occasion of exercising all other vertues, which is the only meanes to attaine vnto them. Now you shall haue the occasion of exercising humility, now obedience; at other times Pouerty, Patience, and so likewise all other vertues. And in the meane time, the more you exercise  
your

Ecc. 2. 3.

Trac. 6.  
6. 14. &  
13.

your selfe in this resignation and conformity with the will of God, the more you shall goe increasing and perfecting your selfe therein; as also the greater shall your profit and perfection in all other vertues be; *Coniunge te Deo, & sustine ut crescat in nouissimo vita tua*, saysthe Wise man, vnite your selfe to God, conforme your selfe in all, vnto his holy will; another version hath *conglutinare Deo*, be as it were glued vnto him, and made one with him, and so you will exceedingly increase and profit in vertue. For this reason the Masters of spirituall life doe counsaile vs, (and it is a most good and profitabla aduice) to singe out some one eminent & Master vertue, in which may be comprized all the rest, and to bestow our selues particularly to prayer, and the whole scope of our examen and other exercises, in the pursuit of it; and that, because attending only vnto it we may more easely attaine vnto it, and hauing attained it, we may be Masters of all the rest. Now one of the principall things vpon which we are to cast our eyes, for this effect, is this resignation and intire conformity with the will of God; and in this

both

both our prayer, and examen will be profitably bestowed, although it were for diuers yeares, yea our whole life long; seeing that in attaining vnto this, we should together attaine vnto all other vertues.

On those words of the Apostle S. *Act. 9. 6.*  
*Paul. Domine quid me vis facere?* Lord *Ber. ser.*  
what would you haue me to do? *S. Bernard* says, *O verbum breue, sed plenū, sed* *1. de cō-*  
*efficax, sed dignum omni acceptione!* *uersione*  
O word short, but full, comprehending *S. Pauli*  
all, excepting nothing. Lord what is your  
pleasure that I should do? O short word,  
but wonderous pithy, but exprest to the  
life, but efficacious, and worthy of all  
praise; If you desire therefore a short in-  
struction, and an abridgment of the art  
of acquiring perfection, behold it here,  
say alwaies with the Apostle, Lord what *Psal. 36.*  
would you haue me do? and with the *8. & psal.*  
Prophet my hart is prepared, for to do *107. 1.*  
all whatsoeuer you shall require of me,  
haue this alwaies in your mouth & hart;  
and your progresse in perfection will be  
answerable, to the profit which you make  
in this.

There is yet an other good and profit  
in this exercise, from whence we may  
E furnish

furnish our selues with an excellent remedy, against a certaine sort of tentation, which familiarly vses to offer it selfe vnto vs; The diuell doth labour sometimes to disquiet vs, with certaine tentations and conditionall thoughts, by way of interrogation demaunding of vs; what if one should say this or this vnto you, how would you answere him? and in such and such an circumstance, how would you behaue your selfe? if such a thing should happen what would you do? & the enemy crafty as he is, will present things vnto vs in such a manner, that on which side soeuer we turne vs, we shall remaine perplext and not dare to venture out, imagining that on either side we shall fall into the snares: and seeing it is all one vnto the enemy, whether those things by which he doth deceaue vs, be true or only apparant, and counterfait, so as he may but play his prize, and wrest from vs some ill consent or other, he hath his end, and takes no further care. To such tentations they say commonly, that there is no necessity to answere I or no, yea they affirme that it is better to giue no answere at all, especially for those persons who are  
scru-

scrupulous, since it is that which the diuell seekes to hold party with them, and bring them to defend and proue: for he is not to seeeke in his replies; and how brauely resolved so euer they enter the skirmish with him, they are not like to come of without a brokē head. But there occurs to me an excellent and profitable answer to put of these tētations with all, which I esteeme to be a farre better remedy, then the not answering them, and it is that which wee are going to declare; to wit to euery one of these demaunds (deuoutly shutting of our eyes) to answer if that be the will of God, it is also mine; if God desire to haue it so, I desire it likewise; that which pleaseth God in it, shal also please me; I referre my selfe in euery thing vnto his will; I will as farre as I may performe my duty in it; God I hope will giue me his grace, that I may not offend him in it, but do all according to his holy will. Behold here a generall answer, to giue satisfaction vnto all such demaunds, and in its generality it imployes no difficulty, but is rather the more easy and familiar. For if it be the will of God, it is best and most

conuenient for me, I may with all assurance, cast my selfe, in vttering that which hath been said, into the armes of God Almightyes will. and hereby the diuell will be frustrated of his purposes, and depart ashamed, and we shall become ioyfull and couragious with the victory. And as in tentations against our faith they counsaile (especially those who are scrupulous) to answer nothing in particular, but in generall to say; I beleue and hold all which our holy Mother the Church beleuees and holds; so also in this tentation whereof we speake, the best remedy is to giue no answer in particular, but to haue recourse vnto the will of God, which is both good and perfect in a most high degree.

## THE VIII. CHAPTER.

*Wherin is confirmed by some examples, how gratefull vnto God, this exercise is, of the conformity of our wills with his, and of the great perfection which is contained in it.*

Cæsarius  
lib. 10.

**C**Æsarius relates how there was a Monke in a certaine Monastery,  
vnto



vnto whom God had communicated a  
singular grace of working Miracles; in so  
much as he cured diseased persons, euen <sup>dialog</sup>  
with the only touch of his garments or of <sup>cap. 6.</sup>  
the girdle with which he girded himself:  
his Abbot considering this attentiuely on  
the one side. and on the other obseruing  
in this Religious no particular notes of  
any s<sup>a</sup>ctity, called him vnto him one day  
in priuat, and earnestly coniured him, to  
declare vnto him the reason, why God  
did worke so many Miracles by him? the  
holy man ingeniously confest that hee  
knew none; for said he, I fast no more  
then any of the rest, my disciplines and  
penances are not exceeding theirs, I spend  
no more time in prayer, and allow no  
lesse time to sleepe then any of the rest.  
All that I can affirme of my selfe is onely  
this, that neither prosperity doth elate  
my mind, nor aduersity depresse it, there  
being nothing in chaunce which can dis-  
turbe the quiet of my hart; my soule in  
all occasions enioyes one tenour of tran-  
quillity and peace, how euer straunge or  
vncouth they may be vnto my selfe or o-  
thers. His Abbot wondering ask't him;  
were you then nothing troubled the o-

ther day, when that same knight our enemy set fier on our granary, and burnt our wholl prouision for the yeare? No truly, answered the holy man; the content of my soule was no waies touched with it: for I had long before, committed all vnto the hands of God: whence it comes, that I receaue as well prosperity as aduersity, as well want as plenty, as equall benefits proceeding from those holy hands of his. Wherupon the Abbot acknowledged that to be the cause of the vertue of working so many Miracles.

Blosius  
in appē-  
dice ad  
institu-  
tionem  
spirit. ca.  
1. in fine

*Blosius* recounts. how a certaine poore begger, but otherwise leading a holy and exemplar life, being demaunded by a learned diuine, how he was arriued to so great perfection, answered. I haue taken a resolution, to haue all my dependancy on the diuine will, to which I haue so wholly comforted mine owne, that what soeuer God wils, I also would haue: when hunger paines me, or the cold bites, I praise Almighty God: be the weather faire, or rainy or tempestuous, I praise God still; whatsoeuer he sends me, or whatsoeuer befalls me through his permission, be it sweet or bitter, be it vnlucky  
or

or fortunat, I am alwaies glad, and receiue it coming from him, as the greatest fauour he could do vnto me; resigning my selfe with all humility entirely vnto him: My soule hath been able to find no rest in any thing, which is lesse then God, and now I haue found out my God in whom I haue eternall peace and rest.

We read also in the same *Blosius* of a holy Virgin who being demaunded how shee had attained vnto so high perfectiō, answered: I haue receaued all troubles and aduersities, with a great equality of mind as comming from the hand of Almighty God, if any one chaūced to trouble or iniure me, I presently procured to requite him with some speciall benefit, I haue neuer made my complaint of what I suffered vnto any one, but haue had mine only recourse to God Almighty, from whom I haue presently receaued redresse and comfort.

*Blos. vbi  
sup. & c.  
10. [mo-  
nil. spir.*

He writes also of an other Virgin of great sanctity, who being asked by the exercise of what vertue shee had obtained so great perfectiō, answered. With much humility, I was neuer so ouerwhelmed with griefs and oppressions of hart, as not

euē to long to suffer farre more for the loue of God, esteeming my selfe vnworthy, of so great graces and fauours as they were.

Taule-  
rus ser.  
i. de Cir-  
cumcis.

*Taulerus* recounts of a certaine great seruāt of Almighty God, who had wholly resigned her selfe into his blessed hands, vnto whose prayers many recommending the happy successe of their affaires and businesse: shee denying them vnto none, would oftentimes forget to pray for some; and yet notwithstanding, all things succeeding according to their harts desire, who had commended themselues vnto her deuotions. many came to thanke her, & acknowledge the efficacy of her prayers, whō shee had not so much as thought vpon; when shee blushing at their mistake, would bid them render all their thanks to God, for as for her, shee had in nothing furthered their businesse. At last many coming to her in this māner whom shee had forgot, she began to make an amarous complaint to God for giuing such good successe and dispatch to all affaires, which were commended vnto her deuotions, in so much as they came vsually to giue her thanks for them, for whom

whom shee neuer had petitioned : vnto whom her blessed Lord answered . you must know my dearest, that on that day when you resigned your wil to me I gaue you reciprocally mine; since when , although you should aske nothing in particular, yet whatsoeuer I saw you inclined vnto, I should effect it according to your desire.

We read *in the lines of the Fathers* of in vitis Patrum. a husbandman whose fields and vines, were far more fruitfull, then any land of his neighbours there about; who demaūding of him how it came to passe he answered them that it was no wonder, that his ground did bring forth so good increase since he had the times and seasons in his owne hands; wherupon they being far more astonished th<sup>t</sup> before. ask't him how that could be. Why said he, I neuer desire other time or season th<sup>t</sup> what God pleaseth to send; and because I will , that which God wills , he giues me that fruit which I desire.

*Seuerus Sulpitius* writing the life of *S. Martin* affirmes of him, that during that long time which he conuers't with him, he neuer saw him angry, nor melancholy, but

but alwaies cheerfull, and quietly composed ; and he ascribes it to this vertue, which he was eminent in , of receauing all what euer hapned to him, as sent vnto him from the hand of God ; & so he conformed himselfe , vnto his blessed will in euery thing, with a great alacrity and resignation.

## THE IX. CHAPTER.

*Of some other considerations, which may reder this exercise of conformity with the will of God , both easy and pleasant to vs.*

Cap. 1.  
& 2.

**V**Nto the end that this exercise of the conformity with the will of God, may be both easy and delightfull to vs, it is first necessary that we haue alwaies before our eyes, that foundation which we haue laid from the beginning ; to wit that no affliction or aduersity can happen to vs, which hath not passed through the hands of God, being examined and registred by his most bleiled will , which verity our Sauiour *Christ* hath not only taught vs by word but by example. Whē he commaunded *S. Peter* the night of his Passion to sheath his sword, he added:

*Cali-*

with the will of God. Chap. 9. 75

*Calicem, quem dedit Pater, non vis ut bibam illum?* wouldst thou not haue me drinke the chalice which my Father hath sent me? he did not say, the chalice which *Iudas*, & the Scribes & Pharisees had filled out for him, since he knew well that they were only as seruants to administer that draught vnto him, which his Father had set, & that al which they out of their rācorous enuy & malice did, was so ordained by the infinit wisdome & goodnes of his heauenly Father, for the redēption of the sinnefull world, and so he answered afterwards to Pilat, when he boasted that he had power to crucify or to deliuer him; *Non haberes potestatem aduersum me ullam, nisi tibi datum esset de super*, thou shouldest haue no power ouer me, vnles it were giuen thee from aboue, which the holy Fathers explicat: *nisi ex diuina dispositione & ordinatione id factū esset*, declaring there by, that there is nothing happens but by the disposition and ordinance of God. S. Peter in the Actes of the Apostles hath merueilously explicated this, in his declaration of those words of the Prophet; *Quare fremuerunt gentes, & populi meditati sunt inania?* *aſtire-*

Ioan. 18.

11.

Ioan. 19.

11  
Chry. ho

8. in

Ioan.

Ciril. li.

12 c. 22.

in Ioan.

Irē. li. 4.

contra

hereses

c. 34.

Aug. ser.

110. lup.

runt

Ioānem. *runt Reges terra, & Principes conuen-*  
 Act 4.26 *runt in unum aduersus Dominum, & ad-*  
 Psal. 2.1. *uersus Christum eius* where he says: Cō-

*uenerunt enim verè in ciuitate ista, ad-*  
*uersus sanctum puerū tuum Iesum, quem*  
*unxisti, Herodes & Pontius Pilatus cum*  
*gentibus & populis Israel, facere qua ma-*  
*nus tua, & consilium tuum decreuerunt*  
*fieri.* The Princes and Potentats of the  
 world assembled and were in league to-  
 gether against our Saviour *Christ*, to put  
 that in execution and effect which had  
 been concluded and decreed, in the con-  
 sistory of the Blessed Trinity: and more  
 then what had been there determined of,  
 they could not do. And so we see that  
 when God would not haue it so, all the  
 power of King Herod was not sufficient  
 to take away his life, when he was yet a  
 child, and he who massacred so many  
 Innocents, could not find out the Infant  
 whom he sought; and that, because it was  
 not his pleasure then to dye. How then  
 did the Iewes and Pharisees seeke to lay  
 hands vpon our Saviour to put him to  
 death? once they had him on the very  
 edge of the mountaine on which their  
 City was built, to throw him headlong  
 downe,



downe and the holy Ghospells says: *ipse autem transiēs per medium illorum ibat;* Lucæ 4.

he made his way securely through the midst of them. because it was not his pleasure then to dye, that kind of death, and

therfore they had no power to procure it him: an other time they would haue stoned him, and had euen lifted vp their hands to let them fall in showres of stones vpon him, & he did no more but mildely

expostulat with them, saying; *Multa bona ostendi vobis ex patre meo, propter quod eorum opus, me lapidatis?*

I haue shewed you many good workes, of my Fathers part, for which of them do you now stone me? he would not permit the, nor giue them leaue to discharge their stones vpon him; *Quia nondum venerat hora eius;*

because his houre was not yet come. But when the houre indeed in which he had resolved to dye was come,

then they could execute what he had decreed to suffer, because then he would haue it so, and gaue them leaue to do it:

*hec est hora vestra & potestas tenebrarū,* he told them when they came to apprehend him, I was daily with you teaching in your Tēple, and you haue not taken me,

because

*hac est hora vestra & potestas tenebrarū,* he told them when they came to apprehend him, I was daily with you teaching in your Tēple, and you haue not taken me,

because

because as then my houre was not come, but now it is, and therefore come, behold, heere I am he; What did not *Saul*, do? (who was a figure of this) what diligence vsed he not, what stratagems to get *Dauid* into his hands? A King of *Israell* against a priuat man. *Vt querat pulicem unum*, as *Dauid* said, in search of a silly flea, and yet with all the diligence he could vse, he could neuer intrap him, which the holy scripture notes, and giues the reason of. *Non tradidit eum in manus eius*, because God would not deliuer him ouer vnto his hands; & this is all.

Reg. 26.  
20. & ca.  
24. 15.

1. Reg.  
25. 14.

Cypr.  
serm. de  
oration.  
Domi  
nica.  
Mat. 6.

*S. Cyprian* therefore on these words, & *ne nos inducas in tentationem*, doth well obserue, that in tentations and aduersities, all our feare, deuotion and attention, must only haue God Almighty for their object; seeing that neither the diuel nor any persō, can do vs any harme, vnles God first do giue them faculty.

Dorothe.  
doctr. 13  
Hil c. 29.  
de orat.  
idem di-  
xit Do-

Secondly although this verity, pondered attentiuely, hath great force & efficacy for to conforme vs in al things vnto the will of God; notwithstanding we are not here to make a stay, but we must proceed forwards, to an other subsequent point,

point, which the holy Saints do generally note, & that is; that we ought to perswade our selues, that al things proceeding from the hand of God, are also seruing to our good and profit. The torments of the damned are proceeding from the hand of God, but not for their profit and amendment, but for their punishment: but the paines and afflictions, which God in this life sendsto any one, be he righteous or a sinner, we ought to haue that assurance and beliefe of his infinit mercy & goodness, that they are al directed for our greater good, and as the meanes and helps most proper and necessary, vnto our saluation. And *Iudith* when shee saw her people in so great affliction and distresse, besieged and vexed by their enemies, said: *ad emendationem & non perditionem nostram euenisse credamus*, belecue assuredly, that these miseries and afflictions are sent vnto vs by God for our amendment and not for our perdition, we may well assure our selues, of so good and louing a will as Gods, who tenders vs so dearly, that it inclines to resolue of nothing concerning vs, which is not good, and the best, and most expedient for vs.

like

mino. S.  
Gert. re-  
fert Blo-  
sius. cap.  
11. mo-  
nil. spiri.

*Iudith.*  
8. 27.

Cap. 10  
& 17.

like as hereafter we shall more amply declare.

Thirdly, that this verity may be to our greater profit, & be made vp to the competency of an efficacious meanes, to helpe vs to a perfect conformity with the will of God, it is not inough that we vnderstand in specie only that all things are proceeding from the hand of God, and that we belieue it in grosse and generall, because it is taught vs by faith, or els perhaps we haue read or heard so much; but it is necessary, that we put this beliefe in practise, the better to arriue vnto an experimentall knowledge of it in such manner, as to receaue all things which happen to vs, as if with our owne senses and eyes we did perceauē our Saviour *Christ* in this manner speaking to vs: Here my sonne I send thee this; it is my pleasure that for the present, thou shouldst do or suffer this, or that other thing. For by this meanes it would be a thing most easy and pleasant to vs, to conforme our selues vnto the wil of God in euery thing, since it is most certaine, that should our Saviour *Christ* personally appeare vnto vs and say; behold my sonne, see this is that

that which I desire of you; I would haue you to suffer this paine or sicknes at this time for my sake; it is my pleasure to make vse of you, in this or the other office: it is most certaine I say, that we should vndertake it most willingly, euen our whole liues long, were it a thing of the greatest difficulty in the world, and esteem our selues highly honoured, and happy men, that God would vouchsafte, to serue himselfe with vs, and we should gather only from his commaundingit, that it were the best and conuenientest thing of all others for our saluatiō, without doubting in the least kind therof.

Fourthly we ought to reduce this exercise to practise, both in our prayers and other exercises, by deluing and sinking deepe into this rich mine of so fatherly and particular a prouidence as God hath of vs, to the end that we may the better know how to make due vse of such an inexhaustable treasure, as we shall goe declaring in the following Chapters.

## THE X. CHAPTER.

Of Gods fatherly and particular providence of vs, and of the filiall confidence which we ought to haue in him.

Psal. 5.  
13.

Psal. 20.  
5

**A**Mong other the great riches and treasures which we enioy, who are in the Catholike Church, one of the greatest is Gods fatherly and particular providence of vs; it being most certaine that there is nothing can arriue vnto vs, which hath not first passed and been recorded by the hand of God. And so the Prophet says. *Domine ut scuto bonae voluntatis tuae coronasti nos*, thou hast environed and defended vs, ô Lord, with that good will of thine, as with a sheeld of defence, we are round compassed with this good will of God, in such manner as nothing can come vnto vs which passeth not first by it: and therefore there is nothing which we are to feare; for he wil let nothing passe, but that which may be for our greater good. *Quoniam abscondit me in tabernaculo suo, in die malorum*

With the Will of God. Chap. 10. 83

*lorum protexit me, in abscondito tabernaculi sui.* The Prophet Dauid affirms, that God hides and preserues vs, euen in the most secret of his Tabernacle, and shelters vn vnder his wings: and says yet more, *abscondes eos in abscondito faciei tue*, our Lord doth hide vs in the most hidden part of all his face, which are the eyes, in whose apples he hath lodged vs, and so an other version hath, *in oculis faciei tue*. God hath made vs the very apples of his eyes, to verify that which is said in an other place; *Custodi me vt pupilam oculi. qui tetigerit vos, tangit pupilam oculi mei.* We are warrented vnder his defence and protection as the apples of his eyes, and they are the words of God: whosoever touches you, shall touch me in the sight of mine owne eyes. Can thereby imagined a thing more rich, more pretious, or more worthy of all esteeme then this?

O that we could but maturely apprehend and penetrat this verity! how defence't and fortified should we find our selues? how assured, how cōforted should we be, in all our labours and necessities? If here in this world one haue but a Fa-

Psal. 30.

210

Pf. 10.8.

Zach. 2

8.

ther riche and mighty and one of the  
deereſt fauourits of a King; what cōfidēce,  
what aſſurance hath he in the ſucceſſe of  
all his buſineſſes, knowing that the fa-  
uour, authority and protection of his Fa-  
ther will not be wanting to him? how  
much more reaſon haue we to be confi-  
dent and aſſured, whilſt we conſider that  
we haue him for our Father, in whoſe  
hand is all the dominion of heauen and  
earth? and that nothing can arriue vnto  
vs, which paſſeth not firſt by his paternall  
hands? if a ſonne can reſt himſelf vpon  
the confidence and aſſurance of his Fa-  
thers fauour; how much more confi-  
dence ought we to haue in him, who is  
more our Father then all other Fathers  
beſides, and in compariſon with whom,  
there is none deſerues the tender name of  
Father: for there are no bowells of loue  
which may be compared with the loue of  
God to vs, which ſurpaſſes by infinite de-  
grees all the loues which euer earthly Fa-  
thers were ſenſible of, we may well aſ-  
ſure our ſelues that whatſoeuer ſuch a  
Father ſends vs, is for our greater vtility  
& good; ſeeing that loue which he beares  
vs in his only ſonne, permits him to doe  
nothing



with the will of God. Chap. 10. 85

nothing els then to procure the good of him, for whose loue onely he deliuered ouer his sonne vnto the torments of the crosse. *Qui etiam proprio filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit* Ad Rō. 8. 32.

*illum, quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donauit?* says the Apostle S. Paul. he who hath not spared his only sonne, but hath deliuered him ouer(vnto death) for all of vs. how can it be, but he hath giuen vs with him all other things? he hath giuen vs the most he could, and will he deny vs any little thing? Now if all men ought to haue such confidence in God Almighty; how much more Religious men, whom he hath receaued particularly for his owne, and giuen them both the spirit and hart of sonnes indeed, inuiting them to abandon & forsake the Fathers of their flesh and blood, and to make choice of him for their only true Father? with what hart, what fatherly tendernes shall God loue such as these? what care, what prouidence shall he haue of them? *Quoniam pater meus & mater mea dereliquerunt me: Dominus autem assumpsit me,* a happy choice you haue made of such a deare Father, in place of

Pfal. 12.  
1.

those parents, whom you haue departed with you may now with more reason and greater confidence say. *Dominus regit me, & nihil mihi deerit*, God hath taken vpon him the charge of me, the care of me, and all that belongs to me, and I shall

Pfal. 39.  
18.

want for nothing. *Ego autem mendiculus sum & pauper, Dominus sollicitus est mei*, I am (t'is true) a begger needy and poore, but God is sollicitous and carefull for me. who would not be comforted with this? nay who would not euen melt away in the loue of such a God? Oh who, are you, ô Lord, who haue taken vpon you the charge of me, and haue so intense a care of me, as if in heauen and earth you had no other creature to gouerne but me alone! Oh that we could but delue and make passage deepe inough into this so viscerall, so paternal loue, prouidence and protection which God Almighty hath of vs!

From hence is begotten in the faithfull seruants of Almighty God, a most familiar and filiall confidence in him, which is so excessiue in some, that there is no child in t<sup>e</sup> world who confids so much at all assays in the protection of his Father,

ther, as they in God, seeing they know right well that the bowells of his affectiō to them, is more then either of Father or Mother, which vses to be the tenderest of all; and so the Prophet *Esay* says. *Nun-* Esa. 49.  
*quid obliuisci potest mulier infantē suū,* 15.  
*ut non misereatur filio uteri sui? & si illa*  
*obluta fuerit, ego tamen non obliuiscar*  
*tui. ecce in manibus meis descripsi te.*  
*muri tui coram oculis meis semper:* can  
a mother forget her owne child, so as not  
to haue pittie of the sonne of her wombe?  
and if she should forget, yet will not I for-  
get thee. for behold I beare you coppied  
out in my hands, and your walles are al-  
waies before mine eyes: as much as to say  
I do carry you euen in the palmes of my  
hands, which do present you alwaies be-  
fore mine eyes, for to defend and keepe  
you. and he declares as much by the same  
Prophet with an amorous comparison,  
*qui portamini à meo utero,* euen as a wo- Esa. 49.  
man great with child, doth carry her in- 3.  
fant in her wombe, and is all in all vnto  
it, both lodging, bearer, wall, and nutriti-  
ure; euen so saith God I beare you in my  
bowells. And with this consideration the  
seruants of God do liue in such assurance,

and esteeme themselves so well provided for, so safe against all chaunces. that they are neuer troubled or disquieted with any variety or accident of this life, & in tem-

Ier. 17. 8. *pore siccitatis non erit sollicitum*, the hart of the iust says the Prophet *Hieremy* is neuer subiect to commotion, or losse of the rest & quietnes for the diuers chaüces and succesles of things: seeing they are assured, that nothing can happen to them without the will and priuity of their Father; and of his excessiue loue and goodnes they are most secure; as holding for certaine, that whatsoeuer arriues them is for their greater good, and all which on the one side he takes away frö them, he will restore on the other with aduantage and vsury.

From this confidence so familiar and filiall, which the iust haue in God, is begotten in their soules that so great peace tranquillity & security which they haue, conformable to that of *Esay*, & *sedebit populus meus in pulchritudine pacis*, & *in tabernaculis fiducia*, & *in requie opulenta*, & my people shall rest in the beauty of peace, and in the Tabernacles of confidence, and in a riche repose. Where the  
Pro-

Esa. 32.  
18.

*with the will of God.* Chap. 10. 89

Prophet most fitly and aptly conioynes peace and confidence together, because the one is proceeding from the other, for he who hath his trust and confidence in God hath nothing to feare or to be troubled at, as hauing God to warrant and secure him. And this is that which the royall Prophet sings, *in pace in idipsam dormiam & requiescam, quoniam tu Domine singulariter in se constituisti me,* in peace in the selfe same will sleepe and rest because thou ô Lord hast singularly settled me in peace, and assured my life vnder the hope of thy deare mercy.

*Psal. 4. 9.*

Neither doth this filiall confidence produce peace only, but it accompanies it with a great ioy and gladnes, *Deus autem spei* (says the Apostle *S. Paul*) *repleat vos omni gaudio, & pace in credendo, ut abundetis in spe & virtute Spiritus Sancti,* the God of hope fill you all with ioy, and peace in your beliefe that you may abound in the hope and vertue of the holy Ghost. This firme beliefe of ours. that God knowes what he doth, and doth all for our good, is cause that we feele not those tumults troubles & those anguishes, which they experience who only

*Ad Rō.  
15. 13.*

only looke with eyes of flesh and blood, vpon the chaunce of things; but rather extraordinary gladnes and delight, in extraordinary chaunces: & the more a man shall haue of confidence, the more abundant shall his spiritual ioy and gladnes be: for the more he shall confide and loue, the greater shall his assurance be, that the issue of all things will be to his auaille: neither is it possible that he should otherwise perswade himselfe, or els hope lesse from the exceeding goodnes, and infinit loue of God.

Athana.

This renders the Saints so vndaunted and assured, in the midst of all their afflictions, so as they haue no dread of men, of diuells, beasts, or any thing; as knowing assuredly that without the permission of the will of God, they cannot so much as touch them: and so *S. Athanasius* reports of *B. S. Anthony* that when one time among the rest, the diuells presented themselves in most fearfull shapes, and hideous formes vnto him, of wild and cruel beasts, as of Lyons, Tygers, Bulles, Serpents and Scorpions, all compassing him about, and terrifying him with their claws, teeth, horns, stings, roaring, and fearfull hissing,

so

so as it seemed they would presently deuour him: what did the Blessed Saint? but laugh't them all to scorne: and told them; if you had any vallour you would come but on at once, to fight against a single man as I am; but by reason that you are cowardly, and that God hath depriued you of your might, therefore you come such a rabble together of you, that your number at least may make me affeard, when your forces came not. If God hath giuen you any power ouer me, behold me here, deuour me; but if you haue no permission for to do it, why do you make all this stir for nothing? from whence we may clearly perceauē, that the great peace and courage, which this holy person found within himselfe, in this occasion, was proceeding only from the well considering that they could do nothing without the will of God, and the conforming himselfe vnto that blessed will. We haue diuers other examples of this kind, in the Ecclesiasticall history, and we read the like of our B. Father S. Ignatius, in the fifth booke of his life: and in the second, it is recounted, how once as he sailed towards Rome, there rose such

Greg li.  
3. dial. c.  
16 refert  
aliud si-  
mile ex-  
emplū.  
Li. 5. vite  
P. N Ig-  
nat. c. 9.  
& lib. 2.  
cap. 5.

such a fearfull tempest, that the Mast being split by the violence of the wind, and most of the Cables and tacklings, sheard and broke, all the Passengers being in a mighty feare, and almost dead with the expectation and the dread of death, only he in so great a feare and danger (as he confest himselfe) was scarcely moued to any thing, besides a tender feeling and sorrow, that he had not serued God, so truly and faithfully as he ought; and for any other thing, it neuer touch't the con-

Math. 8.  
27.

fidence of his mind; *quia venti, & mare obediunt ei*, for he knew that the winds and sea were obedient vnto God, and without his will and permission would not lift vp a waue to swallow any one. Let vs likewise study, (the grace of God supposed) to arriue vnto this familiar and filiall confidence in God, and to this assurance and tranquillity of mind, by this exercise of the conformity with the will of God, deluing by the meanes of prayer and consideration, & sinking deeply into this most rich mine of Gods so fatherly prouidence of vs, I am most certaine that nothing can happē to me, & that neither the diuels nor men, nor any creature, can



can do more vnto me, the God giues way to and permits: and in his holy name let that be done, I do not refuse it, neither desire any thing but purely the will of God.

We read of *S. Gertrude* that neither daungers, nor tribulation, neither temporall losse nor any hinderāces, no not so much as her owne defects and faults could euer obscure that constant and secure confidence which shee had in the most gracious mercy of Almighty God, she belieuing most assuredly that all aswel prosperity as aduersity would by that diuine prouidence be conuerted into good, and our Lord once said vnto this virgin: The assured cōfidence which a man hath in me, belieuing me vndoubtedly both to be able and willing to assist him faithfully in all occasions, doth euen pierce my hart, and offer such violence vnto my mercy, that I cannot be wanting vnto such a creature, for the increase of his merit, and mine owne delight to see him so intirely dependant on me: neither can I otherwise choose but fauour him, for hauing so free and confident recourse to that which I am, and which I am able to do: and he  
vseth

Blos. c.  
11. mon.  
spirit,

- Blofius  
vbi sup.

vleth this forme of speaking, like to one who were transported & as it were with fond loue. It is recounted of *S. Mechtilda*, that our Sauour said vnto her. It is most gratefull vnto me, that men do confide in my goodnes and presume of my fauours towards them. for whosoeuer doth humbly put his trust, and firmly belieue in me, I will both in this life be gracious to him, and after his death reward him about his merites. The more one belieues & piously presumes of my goodnes towards him, the more euen to an infinite proportion shall he obtaine of me; seeing it is impossible for a man not to receiue of me that, which he hath hoped for and holily confided to obtaine: and therefore it is most profitable for a man, to promise the most vnto his hope, and to belieue my promises to him. And to the same *Mechtilda*, desirous to know what we were chiefly to belieue of his vn-speakable goodnes, our Lord answered, belieue with an assured faith, that I will receaue thee after thou art dead, as a Father would do his best beloued child; and that neuer any Father did so faithfully deuide his inheritāce with his only child,

*with the will of God.* Chap. 10. 95  
as I will communicat both my selfe and  
all I haue with thee, whosoever shall fir-  
mely belieue this of my goodnes, with an  
humble charity, shall be happy aboue all  
beliefe.

## THE XI. CHAPTER.

*Of diuers passages and examples of the  
holy Scripture, which may helpe vs  
much to obtaine this familiar and fi-  
liall confidence in God.*

**I**T will be good for vs first of all, to put  
before our eyes the frequent custome  
of those ancient Fathers, to attribute vn-  
to God, all things which happened to  
them, by what meanes or way soeuer they  
arriued. In the two and fortieth Chapter  
of Genesis, the holy Scripture recounts,  
how *Iosephs* brethren, whilst they were  
returning towards their countrey with  
that prouision of corne which they had  
bought in *Egypt*, in opening their sacks  
(as they baited at an Inne to prouander  
their beasts) did find each one in the  
mouth of his sacke, the mony, which  
they had disbursed for their corne  
(which

(which *Ioseph* had comaunded his steward to restore in that manner vnkowne to them) they perceiuing this and being much troubled cryed one vnto an other; *Quidnam est hoc quod fecit nobis Deus?*

Gen. 42.  
28.

what is this, which God hath done vnto vs? where we are to obserue, that they did not say, this is some plot laid for vs, there is some practise in it, or the steward through his negligence hath left the money in our sacks; neither perhaps he ment to bestow it on vs in Almes; but they ascribed it vnto God saying, what is this which God hath done vnto vs? in it acknowledging that as the leafe of a tree could not be shaken but by the will of God, so also that could not happen but by the same prouidence. And when *Iacob* remoued with all his family into *Egypt*, *Ioseph* with all his children went to visite him, who being demaunded by his Father what children thole were? answered: *filij mei sunt, quos donauit mihi Deus*

Gen. 48.

9.

in hoc loco, they are my children whom God hath bestowed vpon me in this place; & the like answer *Iacob* gaue when meeting with his brother *Esau*, and he demaunding of him what children thole were

were

were which he had brought with him,  
 he answered, *paruuli sunt quos donauit* Gen. 33:  
*mihi Deus*, they are little ones whō God  
 hath bestowed vpon me, and presenting  
 him with certaine things he said. *Suscipe*  
*benedictionem quam attuli tibi, & quam* Gen. 33:  
*donauit mihi Deus tribuens omnia*, re- 11.  
 ceauē this present (which he calls a bene-  
 diction of God, whose euery gift is a be-  
 nefit) receauē it (said he) which I haue  
 brought for you, and which God hath  
 bestowed vpon me, who is the distribu-  
 ter of euery thing. Also when *David* all  
 incens't with rage and passion was on his  
 way to ruine the house of *Nabal*, and  
*Abigail* meeting him with her presents  
 and prayers assuaged his fury, *David* said; Reg. 23:  
*Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel, qui mi-* 32.  
*fit hodie te in occursum meum, ne irem*  
*ad sanguinem*. Blessed be the Lord God  
 of Israell, who hath sent thee to day to  
 meet me, that I might not go forwards  
 vnto blood and to the slaughter of the  
 house of *Nabal*. as if he had said, you are  
 not come of your selfe, hut God hath  
 sent you vnto the end that I might not  
 sinne, I acknowledge the benefit from  
 him, vnto him be praise and thanks ther-  
 fore.

fore. This was the common stile among those auncient Fathers, which we ought to make ours by imitation.

But to come neerer to the matter; the  
 Gen. 37. History of *Ioseph*, which we haue touch't  
 in passing, is no lesse straunge, then ser-  
 uing to our purpose; whom his brothers  
 out of enuy (that he might not come to  
 raigne ouer them, and be their Lord ac-  
 cording to his dreame,) sold into bon-  
 dage vnto certaine marchants: and the  
 same meanes, which they serued their  
 turnes withall to prouide that he might  
 not come to raigne ouer them, God made  
 vse of to effect that which his diuine pro-  
 uidence had designed; which was, both  
 to make him Lord ouer them, and all  
 the land of *Egypt*. And so the same *Ioseph*  
 affirmed vnto his brothers, when dis-  
 couering himselfe vnto them, they were  
 euen lost in the feare and amazement of  
 so wonderous an euent, *Nolite pauere,*

Gen. 25. *nec vobis durum esse videatur, quod ven-*  
 5. *didistis me in his regionibus: pro salute*  
*enim vestra misit me Deus ante vos in*  
*Egyptum, premisitque me Deus ut reser-*  
*uementi super terram, & escas ad viuen-*  
*dum habere possitis.* be not affraid nei-  
 ther

ther let it seeme vnto you a hard case,  
that you did sell me into these coun-  
tries: for God for your (good and) safety  
hath sent me hither before you into E-  
gypt; God hath sent me before, that you  
might be maintained vpon the earth, and  
be prouided with victuals to sustaine  
your liues, together with all the people  
of Israel. It is God, said he, who hath sent  
me, *non vestro consilio, sed Dei volun-*  
*tate huc missus sum*; It was not your  
doing, but the prouidence of God; *Num*  
*Dei possumus resistere voluntati? vos co-*  
*gitaſtis de me malum, sed Deus vertit il-*  
*lud in bonum, vt exaltaret me; sicut in*  
*praesentiarum cernitis, & saluos faceret*  
*populos multos*, who can resist the will of  
God? you imagined euell against me, but  
God conuerted it all to good, that he  
might exalt me, like as you see at this pre-  
sent, and worke the safety of many peo-  
ple: And who is there who hereafter will  
not confide in God? who shall feare any  
more the malice of men, or the worlds  
aduerſities? When they shall know that  
all is foreseen by God, & that he vses the  
same meanes, which they inuent to trou-  
ble and persecute vs, for our aduance-

Gen. 50.  
19.

Esa. 46.  
10.

ment and our greater good? *Consilium meum stabit, & omnis voluntas mea fiet,* says God by the Prophet *Esa*, go which way you will, you haue your choyce, but so, as at the end whither you will or no, you must arriue thither where God would haue you go, who makes vse of your meanes vnto that end.

Chri. hō.  
63. super  
Genes.  
Gen. 40.  
23.

*S. Chrysostome* considers yet another particular in this History, seruing for our present purpose, treating how *Pharao* cupbearer, after he was restored vnto his office, for two whole yeares neuer had thought of *Ioseph* his Interpreter, although he had most earnestly comended himself vnto his memory, to beseech *Pharao* for his deliery. Do you thinke, saith this saint, that this his forgetfulnes was by chaunce? No assure your selfe, but so resolved vpon & decreed by God, intending to await the conueniency of time, to deliue *Ioseph* out of prisō vnto his greater glory and aduancement, for if the Cupbearer had been mindfull of him, it had been an easy matter for him, considering his authority, to haue work't vnder hand his deliery so, as none should euer haue seen or hard of him, but God intended not to haue



haue him so deliuered, but in such manner as might gaine him honour and authority; permitting the other to be forgetfull of him for two yeares together, that the dreame of *Pharao* might chaūce in the interim, when at the instance of the King of himselfe, compelled by necessity he might be deliuered from prison with that glory and Maieſty, to be made ruler ouer the whole Land of Egypt. God knowes well ſaith *S. Chryſoſtome* like a cunning artizā, how long the Gould muſt be trying in the fier, and when t'is fitteſt time to take it out.

In the firſt booke of Kings we read another example in which the prouidence of God, euen in little & particular things is perceaued moſt clearly. God told the Prophet *Samuel* that he would ſhew vnto him, that man who was to be King of *Iſrael*, vnto the end he might ānoint him, and ſaid, *hac ipſa hora qua nunc eſt, cras mittam virum ad te de terra Beniamin,* 1. Reg. 9. 16.  
*& unges eum Ducem ſuper populum meū* *Iſrael*, to morrow at this very hower I will ſend vnto thee the man whom thou art to annoint for King, & this was *Saul*; whoſe manner of ſending was this; The

ailes of his Father were gone astray, and his Father sent him for to seek them out: he tooke a boy with him, and sought all vp and downe, but could heare no newes of them; whereupon *Saul* was in mind to returne home againe, by reason it was late, and his Father might be fearfull what was become of them; but the boy was of opinion that they should by no meanes returne, vntill they had found them out: there is a man of God here hard by, said he (meaning the Prophet *Samuel*) let vs haue recourse to him, and without doubt he will tell vs newes of them. Hereupon they go to find *Samuel* out, and at their arriual God said vnto him; *Ecce vir, quem dixeram tibi; iste dominabitur populo meo*, this is he whom I told you I would send; this is the man you must annoint for King. O strange and wonderfull iudgment of God Almighty! his Father sent him to seeke after his strayed beasts, and God sent him to *Samuel* to be annointed King. What difference is there betwixt the designs and pretensions of men, and God? How farre was *Saul* and his Father from any such thought, that he was then going to be

be annointed and consecrated King? and so how farre are you and your Father & superiour oftentimes, from imagining that which God intends to do. From that which you thinke least of, God Almighty drawes forth his owne ends. No, no, the beasts were not lost but by the will of God, neither was it by chaunce that *Saul* was sent by his Father to seeke the out, neither that he could not find them, nor the counsaile of the boy to go to the Prophet *Samuel* to heare newes of them, but all was so ordained and designed by God, who vsed those meanes to send *Saul* vnto *Samuel*, that according as he had premonished him, he might annoint him King. Your Father, when he sends you to study at one of the Vniuersities, or beyond the seas, intends to bring you vp to learning, and thereby to make you a way vnto some dignity wherby you may honourably liue hereafter; and he deceaues himselfe, for God sends you thither to incorporate you into his owne house, and make you Religious. *S. Augustin* when he went from Rome to Milan, and also *Symmachus* the Gouvernour of the Citty who sent him thither, did

thinke the cause of his going was to teach Rhethorick there, but there was no such matter, for God sent him thither that *S. Ambrose* might conuert him and make him Catholike.

Let vs consider a little the sundry vocations of men, and the particular and expresse waies, and straunge passages, by which God leads seuerall men vnto Religion; for doubtles it is a thing deseruing all admiration to see, that had it not been for such a toy or trifling thing, which hapned to you, in such a circumstance, you had neuer been Religious: and now that thing was expressely ordained & so ordered by God, to the end to bring you to Religion; which in passing ought to be reflected on by those, whose minds are oftentimes troubled and tempted to call in doubt whither their vocations were from God or no, since they haue been brought into Religion, by such intricat waies as we haue mentioned; which is no other then an illusion of the enemy, enuious of that state in which you are, since there is nothing more ordinary to God, then to serue him selfe of such vnlkely waies, vnto that end which he pretends

tends of his greater glory, and your greater vtility and good; and of this we haue many examples in the liues of Saints. God ordained not your iourney to seeke out the beasts. *Nunquid de bobus cura est Deo?* But he would lead you by that way vnto a kingdom, *seruire Deo regnare est.* 1. Cor.

When the Prophet *Samuel* afterwards 9. 9. was sent from God, to checke *Saul* for his disobedience in not wholly ruining *Amalec* as God had commaunded him, the Prophet hauing sharply reprehended him, and turning his backe for to depart, *Saul* tooke him by his garment to stay him, and desire him to pray for him and reconcile him vnto God againe; and the text says, that the peece of *Samuels* garment which *Saul* laid hold vpon, toar of, and remained in his hand. Who would not thinke it a very chaunce that the garment of the Prophet should be rent 1. Reg. and torne? either because that *Saul* held 15. 27. fast and pulck't him hard, or that the Prophets garment was lightly rent, because it was old and worne: who I say would not imagine this rather, then that it was so disposed of by the particular prouidence of God; to signify that *Saul* was

was dewided from his kingdom, and depriued of his crowne for his offences, and yet this was it which *Samuel* said, to *Saul*, when he saw what was happened; *scidit Dominus regnum Israel à te hodie, & tradidit illud proximo tuo meliori te*, the Lord (by the diuision of my garmēt) giues thee to vnderstand, that to day the kingdom of Israel is rent from thee, and deliuered vnto thy neighbour a better man then thou.

1. Reg. 23. 26. In the same first booke of the Kings, is recounted how *Saul* once held *David* and his people so besieged, in *modum corona*, that *David* euen despaired of escaping his hands: being in this distresse, there arriues in al hast a Post in the Campe of *Saul*, bringing newes that the *Philistims* had made impression on his Countrey, ransacking and spoyling all, wherupon *Saul* to make head against that daunger which did most concerne him, was inforced to breake vp his siege, and lead his forces against the *Philistims*, and so *David* escap't. This enterprize and inuasion of the *Philistims* was no waies casuall, but a kind of stratagem of Almighty God, by that meanes to deliuer  
*David*

*David* from his enemy.

An other time the Princes or *Satrapa* of the *Philistims* would needes expell *David* out of their Army, and effected so much, as their King *Achas* commaunded him to his house, although otherwise he stood well affected towards him, and was delighted in his company. *Sed Satrapis non places.* this seems to haue been done only to please the *Satrapa*, & an vn lucky chaunce for him; but it happened otherwise, and that which they intended vnto his mischiefe, was directed by the particular prouidence of God vnto an other end: for *David* being returned vnto his house, found that the *Amaleks* had set fier of *Siceleg* a towne of his, and had led away into captiuitie, all the woemen and children, *à minimo vsque ad magnum*, and among the rest the woemen of his owne houthold; whereupon he follow's them vpon the spure, ouertakes, defeats them, and recouers all the pray, and prisoners againe, euen to a man. Which he could not haue done, had not the *Satrapa* expelled him their Army: and vnto this end did God direct their counsaile, how euer they had disposed of it for an other end.

end. In the History of *Esther* this particular prouidence of God is also cleerly to be seene, euen in very small and particular accidents, in that his so miraculous deliurance of the Iewish Nation, from the cruell sentence of King *Assuerus*: as that *Vasti* should be reiected & *Esther* chosen for Queen, a Iew by nation, the better and with more interest thereafter to intercede for them. It seemes that *Mardocheus* by meer chaunce came to haue notice, and to detect the *Eunuches* conspiracy against the life of King *Assuerus*, and that the King on night should haue no list to sleepe, & to passe away the tediousnes of the night, should cause the Chronicles of the time to be fetch't and read, and that they should light iust vpon that place, where the seruices of *Mardocheus* were mentioned: but nothing of all this did happen by casualty, but all was so disposed by the profound iudgmēt of Almighty God, and his particular prouidence, which had chosen those meanes for the deliury of his people; & so *Mardocheus* sent word to *Esther* when shee durst not aduenture to speake vnto the King, alledging for her excuse that he had not called for her. *Quis*



*non it utrum idcirco ad regnum veneris,* Ester. 4  
*ut in tali tempore parareris?* who knows 14.

but you haue been therfore chosen vnto the dignity of Queen, that you might be ready in such a time as this, to afford vs helpe and succour.

The holy Scripture and the holy Ecclesiasticall Histories are full of the like accidents, the better to teach vs to ascribe all chaunces vnto God, and receaue them as proceeding from his diuine hand for our greater commodity and good. In the booke of *S. Clements* reueus, we read a most remarkable History seruing for our present purpose; Whilst *S. Peter* had *Simon Magus* hotly in pursuit at Rome, Saint *Barnaby* conuerted Saint *Clement* to the Christian faith, who ha-  
Clemēt  
l. recog  
nitionū  
 uing recourse vnto Saint *Peter*, declared vnto him the progresse of his conuersion, and besought him to add his helpe, vnto the better instructing of him in the Misteries of his beliefe. Saint *Peter* told him, that he came most oportunely, for (said he) to morrow is appointed for a publique disputation, betwixt *Simon* the Magician and my selfe, where being pre-  
sent

sent you may both see and be satisfied in that which you desire: whilst they were yet in speaking, in comes two of *Symon Magus* disciples, sent from him vnto *S. Peter* to desire that by reason of some vrgent affaires of his, the disputation might be for some two or three daies deferred. *S. Peter* told them that he was content. They departing. *S. Peter* perceaued *S. Clement* sentibly waxing sad, and melancholy; and demunded of him what the matter was? to whom *S. Clement* replied; Father I must confesse that it is a cause of much affliction to me, to see this disputation respited, which I so much desired to haue been to morrow. hereupon hapned a thing worthy to be obserued in a thing of small importance: for *S. Peter* tooke him by the hand, and discours't at large vnto him on this subiect, saying amongst many other things. Behold, my sonne, when any thing chaunces among the heathens, otherwise then they desire. they become straigh waies troubled; but it becomes vs who know that God directs and gouernes all, to be in continuall quiet and repose: and vnderstand, sonne, that this is so hapned for your greater

*With the will of God.* Chap. II. III  
greater good ; for if the disputation had  
been to morrow , there had passed many  
things about your vnderstanding, which  
now in the meane time I will so informe  
as you shall receaue both much content  
and profit , when the day of disputation  
comes.

I will conclude with a domestick ex-  
ample, which is recorded in the life of our  
B. Father; in which appears most appar-  
ently this diuine providence wherof we  
speake: and it is concerning the depar-  
ture of *S. Xauerus* towards the east In-  
dies. The meanes by which he came to be  
designed for that expedition are most  
worthy of consideration. Our B. F. *S.*  
*Ignatius* designed for that mission , *F.*  
*Simon Rodriguez*, & *F. Nicholas Boba-*  
*dilla* : *F. Simon* as that time was much  
crazed with a Quartane Ague , yet not-  
withstanding without delay he embark't  
himselfe for *Portugall*, *F. Bobadilla* was  
aduertised by letter that he should leaue  
*Calabria* and repaire presently to Rome:  
he came, but so weakned with the Iour-  
ney and those extreeme wants which he  
had suffered vpon the way, and withall  
so ill disposed in one of his leggs , that it  
was

Lib. 2.c.  
16 vitæ  
P. N. Ig.  
& in vita  
P. Fran-  
cisci Xa-  
uerij.

was necessary he should remaine sometime vnder cure after his arriual to Rome, and *Don Petro Mascaregna's* haft calling away for *Portugall*, *S. Ignatius* of necessity was to take a new resolution, (the Embassadour still vrging for another Father) and substitute (by happy aduenture) *S. Xauerus* in *Bobadilla's* place; It might seem that by reason *F. Bobadilla* was named for that Iourney and not *S. Xauerus*, and that he was only, because of the Embassadours necessity of departure, substituted into the others place, that his designement for that expedition was by meer hazard thought vpon, but there was no chaunce in it, but only the particular prouidence of God, which had determined to make him the glorious Apostle of those Easterne parts; & moreover when they were arriued in *Portugall*, the *Portugezi* considering the great profit which they did, entred vpon a resolution to detaine them both there; neither could they be so wholly drawne from it, as not to keepe the one, whilst the other should be suffered to goe on his voyage to the Indies. Looke here how things seeme to goe by chaunce: neuer-  
theles

theles vnto God there is nothing casuall: in the end, the expedition to the Indies fell vnto *S. Xauerus* lot, because the will of God had so disposed of it, as a thing the most conferring to his glory, and the saluation of so many soules. Let men proiect and designe things as they please, and take that way to effect them, as they fancy best; but God will make vse of those meanes which they inuent, to put his owne ends in execution, and order all as shall be most expedient, and to his greater glory.

Besides these examples and others the like which the holy scripture affords vs, and which we daily see and experience aswell in our selues as others, it is requisite that we proceed by the way of prayer, and consideration, to confirme and imprint in our hearts this happy confidence. Neither are we to impose an end vnto this exercise, vntill we sensibly perceauc in our hearts this familiar and filiall confidence in God; And be assured that the greater this your confidence shall be, wherby you cast your selfe (as it were) into the armes of God, the more and greater shal your security be, and on the

contrary, you shall neuer arriue vnto true peace and quietnes of mind, vntill you haue attained this filiall cōfidence, seeing that without it, there is no thing so ligh and little, which hath not force to dismay and trouble you. Let vs therfore resolue to cast and commit our selues with all speed into the hands of God, and to place our assurāce in him; following that counsell of the Apostle S. Peter. *Omnem soli-*

1. Petri.

5. 7. Psal.

54. 23.

*itudinem vestram proyicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis,* casting all your solicitude in him, because he hath care of you, and the Prophet says. *Iacta super Dominum curam tuam, & ipse te eruet,* cast all the care of your selfe vpon God and he will nourish you. O blessed Lord you haue tendred me so much as to deliuer ouer your selfe for my sake without any reseruatiō, into the hands of those cruell tormenters, for to do with thee whatsoeuer their strangely ingenious malice could inuēt, *Iesum vero tradidit voluntati eorum,* what wonder is it then, if I do put and resigne my selfe intirely into those not cruell, but deare & charitable hands of thine, for to do with me whatsoeuer thou shalt please, when I

Luc 23.

25.

*with the will of God.* Chap. 11. 115

am most certaine that thou wilt do nothing but what may be best, and most conuenient for me. Let vs become ioint-partners in that contract which our Blessed Sauour made with S. Catherine of Siena. Our Lord at sundry times in-deared this Saint vnto him with most sweet priuacy, enriching her noble soule with many high graces and fauours, among the rest one and a most particular one was, that one day appearing vnto her he said, *filia cogita tu de me & ego cogitabo continenter de te*, my daughter do thou thinke of me, and I will haue perpetuall thought of thee. O blessed accord! ô happy exchaunge! ô rich gaine of our soules. This bargaine God is ready to make with euery on of vs: do but lay aside the thought of your selfe and the solicitude of things; and the more you shall forget your selfe to thinke and confide in God, the greater charge and care shall God Almighty haue of you. Who is there who would not with all his soule accept a condition so delicious and auailable, as the Spouse in the Canticles glories to haue made with her beloued. *Ego* Cāt. 7. 10  
*dilecto meo & ad me conuersio eius.* I to

## THE XII. CHAPTER.

*How great profit and perfection it is, to apply prayer vnto this exercise of the conformity with the will of God, and how we are so long to descend vnto particulars until we arrive vnto the third degree of the said conformity.*

Rusbroc  
in fine  
operum  
suorum

**I**ohn Rusbrock a very learned & spirituall man, writs of a certaine Virgin who in rendring an account of her prayer vnto her Ghostly Father a great seruant of Almighty God, and a man of high contemplation with earnest desire to be instructed by him, told him, that her exercise in her prayer, was on the life and passion of our Sauour Christ, and the profit which she reaped from thence, was the knowledge of her selfe, and of her passions and defects, as also a sorrow and compassion for the paine and sufferance of our Sauour Christ, her Confessor told her, that all this was good, but yet on without much vertue might be liuely toucht with tendernes and compassion  
of



of the death and passion of our Sauour Christ, like as we see the naturall loue and affection which one beares an other, doth make him haue a deepe resentment of his friends misery and aduersity. The Virgin then demaunded of him, whether the daily deploing of our sinnes, were a true deuotion or no? he answered it was good, but not the perfectest, seeing that euill naturally brings with it a hatred of it, againe she asked him, whether it were a true deuotion to thinke often on the paines of hell, and the glory of the Blessed? he answered t'was likewise good but as farre from being the best as the former was, seeing that nature its selfe by a certaine instinct doth commonly abhorre and fly from all paine and torment, and loues and seekes after that which may bring vs to content and glory; as when you see but the picture of some faire & pleasant City, you desire presently to inhabit it. This did exceedingly grieue the holy Vigin, and left her much disconsolate and sad in that shee knew not which way she might best apply her exercise of prayers, to be most pleasing to Almighty God. Not long after there appeared to

her an Infant of exquisit beauty, to whom when shee had related the cause of her sadnes, adding withall it was so great that none could comfort her. The Child, did tell her she should forbear to say so, since he himselfe both could and would comfort her; therefore go (said he) vnto your Ghostly Father and declare vnto him, that true and solid deuotion doth consist in the abnegation and contemning of ones selfe, as also in an intire resignation into the hands of God, aswell in aduersity as prosperity, in being straitly vnited by loue to God in euery thing. The Virgin with ioyfull cheer went presently vnto her Ghostly Father, to informe him of all this, who no sooner heard her but he answered. this this is that indeed, to which you are to apply your prayer, seing that heerein consists the true charity and loue of God, and consequently our profit and perfection. It is recounted of an other Virgin, that our Lord taught her to insist long time together vpon these words, *O Lord your will be done one earth as it is in heauen*, and we read of S. Gertrude that inspired by God Almighty shee repeated without any intermission

Refert  
Blot ca.  
11. mon  
spirit.

mission, those words of our Sauour. *Not* *Lucæ 22*  
*my will (ô Lord) be done, but thyne,* 42-  
three hundred sixty five times together,  
and she vnderstood that it was a deuotion  
most gratfull to Almighty God. Let vs  
then imitate these examples, and dire-  
cting all our prayers vnto this end, go for-  
ward courageously in this exercise. Now  
that we may the better, and with greater  
profit doe it, we are to presuppose two  
things. The first is, that this exercise is of  
greatest necessity in time of aduersity, and  
whē we haue any difficulty to ouercome,  
vnto the conquest whereof is required a  
conflict against flesh and blood: for in  
these occurrences there is greatest need  
of vertue, and in such times as those the  
loue which we beare vnto God Almighty  
doth more manifestly appeare. Euen as a  
King in time of peace by obliging his sol-  
diers by his liberality doth shew the affe-  
ction which he beares to them, and they  
in the time of warre in fighting & dying  
for him, do shew the loue and loyall res-  
pect which they haue to him. So in the  
time of spirituall ioy and consolation the  
King of heauen giues vs to vnderstand  
how dearly he tenders vs, and we in the

M. Auila  
to. 2. ep  
fol. 20.

time of desolation & aduersity, do more shew forth our affection vnto his seruice, then we are able to do whilst we are in comfort and prosperity. Master Auila says excellent well, that to render thanke to God in time of consolation is common vnto all, but to blesse and praise him when we are oppressed with tribulation and aduersity, is only proper to the good and perfect and a most harmonious musicke to the eares of God. And he adds that in the midst of aduersity only to say. I render you thanks ô Lord, blessed be God or the like, is of more worth & merit then thousands of thanks and benedictions in time of prosperity, and in this sense the holy Scripture compares the iust vnto the carbuncle; *Gemula carbunculi in ornamento auri*, because that this pretious stone giues greater lustre by night then in the shining day; so in like manner the faithfull and true seruant of God Almighty shines and shewes forth more clearly what he is, in the cloudy night of tribulation, then in the bright sunne shine of prosperity. And therefore the holy Scripture praiseth holy Toby so much, for that he although God per-

Ecc. 32.7

Tob. 2.  
14.

permitted him to fall into sundry calamities, and lastly had deprived him of his sight, yet neuer proceeded in his sadness against Almighty God, nor remitted any thing of his former fidelity and obediēce to his Diuine Maiestie, but he remained alwaies immouable rendring equall thanks to God his whole life long, as well for his blindnes as for the faculty of sight, as holy Iob in his affections had done before. This saith S. *Augustin* is that which we are to indeauour to imitate, *ut in cunctis idem sis, tam in prosperis, quam in aduersis*, that as well in prosperity as aduersity we remaine alwaies the same. *Sicut manus qua eadem est, & cum in palmam extenditur, & cum in pugnum constringitur*: Like as the hand is alwaies the same, as well when we span it out as when we clutch our fist; so likewise the seruant of Almighty God ought alwaies to be at quiet in the interior of his soule, how euer he may seeme to the exterior shew, to be perplexed and sorrowfull. And if it be true which is reported of Socrates, that in the greatest diuersity of fortune, he was alwaies one, and that he was neuer obserued to exceed a moderate-

Iob 1.21

Aug ad  
fratres  
in Herē.  
ser. 4.

Socrates  
refert  
Cicero

lib. 13.  
Tuscula.  
questio.

122

Of our conformity

deration in his mirth or sorrow. *Nec hi-*  
*lariorem quisquam nec tristem Socratem*  
*vidit, equalis fuit in tanta inaequalitan*  
*fortuna vsque ad extremum vita*, what  
extraordinary thing were it in vs, who  
are both Christians and Religious men,  
to indeauour to aspire to a perfection  
vnto which a Heathen had arriued be-  
fore vs.

Secondly we are to know that it is not  
sufficient to haue this conformity with  
the will of God in Generall, seeing it  
will be no hard matter to attaine it so: for  
who is there that will not say, he desires  
that the Diuine will be performed in  
euery thing; and both the good and bad  
say in there *Pater noster*, euery day,  
*your will be done on earth as it is in hea-*  
*uen*, but it is necessary that we consider  
it in preciser manner, and descend vnto  
those particulars which might cost vs  
most paine and difficulty should they ar-  
riue vnto vs, and not to rest vntill we had  
facilitated euery one of them. We are  
not to remaine (as they say) carrying our  
lance at randome without putting it in  
our rest; and alwaies in daunger of being  
cast from our conformity with the will

Trac. 13.  
cap. 16.

of

of God, as soone as any vnexpected difficulty comes and bids vs battaile; but we are to make head against them of our owne accord.

Neither are we to content our selues with this, but we are to inforce our selues to passe onward still, vntill we come to find tast and cordiall delight, that the wil of God is accomplished in vs, although it be in matter of paine sorrow & disesteem, which is the third degree of this conformity; for this is likewise deuided into sundry degrees; the one more sublime and perfect then the other: although chiefly they may be reduc't to three, in the same manner as the Saints haue distributed the vertue of patience. The first is when a man doth neither accept of, nor desire those things which go accompanied with paine, but rather shuns them, yet so as he had rather vndergoe them, then to commit any sinne to be deliuered from them; this is the lowest degree and of cōmaūdment. in so much as although a man in his mishaps be sensible of paine griefe and discontent, although he sigh and grōne whilst he is sicke, and cries out through the vehemency of his griefe, and bewailes  
the

the losse and death of friends , yet with all these he may still haue conformity with the will of God. The second degree is when a man (although he doe not desire that any harme should chaunce vnto him, neither makes choice of it) notwithstanding when it is once hapned to him, doth willingly imbrace and suffer it, because it is the good pleasure and will of God: and this second degree , surpasseth the first, in that a man in some sort hath a liking and affection to suffer discomfort and paine for the loue of God, and proceeds so farre, as to desire it, because it is Gods pleasure it should be so. The first degree supports these things with patience, the second implies besides, the suffering them promptly and with willingnes; The third is when the seruant of Almighty God , out of the great loue he beares our B. Lord, doth not only accept of, and suffer most willingly whatsoever paine and affliction which he shall send him , but also is longing for them, and reioyceth in them because he knows them to be the will of God . And so S.

Act. 5. 41

*Luke writs of the Apostles . Ibant gaudentes a conspectu concily, quoniam digni habiti*



*habiti sunt pro nomine Iesu, contumeliam pati,* after they were most ignominiously whipt, they went reioycing out of the presence of the councell, for hauing been esteemed worthy to suffer contumely for the name of Christ, and the Apostle *S. Paul* says. *Repletus sum consolatione, superabundo gaudio, in omni tribulatione nostrâ,* I am filled full with consolation, and do abound with ioy, in alour tribulation, chaynes and aduersity. and for this reason he prayseth the Hebrews writing vnto them. *Et rapinam bonorum vestrorum cum gaudio suscepistis, cognoscetes vos habere meliorem & manentem substantiam,* you haue receaued ioyfully the losse of your (temporall) goods as knowing your selues to haue better and more lasting riches. Vnto this must we indeauour with the grace of God to arriue, to beare with ioy and gladnes all tribulations and aduersities which may happen to vs as, *S. Iames* counsels vs in his Canonickall Epistle; *Omne gaudium existimate fratres mei, cum in tentationes varias incideritis,* esteem it deare brothers for the completest ioy of all, when you shall fall into  
fundry

Ad Cor.  
7. 4.

Ad Hebe  
20. 34.

Iaco. 1. 2.

sundry tentations; The will and contentment of God ought to be vnto vs a thing so pretious and sweet, that it should be sufficient to conserue and sugar all bitter chaunces which may happen to vs; all the miseries and disgusts of the world, should become sweeter and delicious vnto vs; only because it is the good pleasure, the will of God; and this is it which *S. Gregory* says, *si mens in Deum forti intentione dirigatur, quidquid tibi in hac vita amarum sit, dulce aestimat, omne quod affligit, requiem putat, transire & per mortem appetit, vt obtinere plenius vitam possit*, if our mind were once directed to God with a strong intention, it would esteeme all that were bitter in this life, for sweet, all that were afflicting vs it would account for rest, yea it would euen long to passe by death it selfe, for to obtaine a more full and perfect life.

Greg. li.  
7. mor.  
67.

S. Catha.  
de Sena.

*S. Catherine of Siena* in a certaine Dialogue which shee hath left written of the consummat perfection of a Christian, says that among other things which her deare spouse our Blessed Lord had taught her, one was, that shee should build vp her selfe a chamber of repose, which

which should be round about vaulted with the will of God, and that there she should inclose herselfe and make perpetuall abode, neuer going out, or stirring foot or hand, or casting a looke out from thence, but alwaies remaine recollected in herselfe, as the bee in the hieue, or the pearle in its shell, and although that in the beginning perhaps this habitation might seeme too narrow and retired, notwithstanding shee should soone find it of a wonderfull extent; in so much as without going out of it, shee might recreate her selfe among the eternall mansions of the Blessed, and make greater profit in a few daies there, then shee could do without in a long space of time. Let vs likewise doe the same, and make this our continuall exercise, *Dilectus meus mihi, & ego illi*, my beloued to me, and I to Cant. 2. him, in these two words we haue inough 16. to entertaine our selues for our whole liues, and therefore we ought to haue them alwaies in our mouths and hearts.

THE

## THE XIII. CHAPTER.

*Of the indifferency and conformity with the will of God, which Religious men ought to haue, in going and remaining in any part of the world, where they may be disposed of by Obedience.*

**T**O the end that we may make more profit out of this exercise of the conformity with the will of God, and put in practise that which we haue said, we will go declaring in particular some principall points in which we ought to exercise our selues; and afterwards descend to certaine other Generall heads, which appertaine to all. And now we will begin with those particular things which are contained in our constitutions, since it is most consonant to reason that a Religious man, should chiefly in their obseruance shew forth the vertue and Religion which he hath, and afterward each on may apply this doctrine vnto other things of the same kind, either in his Religion or his state of life.

7p. 65a.  
c. 1. §. 1.

In the seauenth part of the constitutions

tions our B. Father treating of Missions  
whic his on of the principall functions of  
our Institut, says that those of the Society  
are to be indifferent to go, and make their  
aboade in any part of the world where  
soeuer obediēce shall send thē, either amōg  
Christians or Infidels, either to the Indies, <sup>c. 1. exā.  
§. 5. & 5,  
p. const.</sup>  
or among the Hereticks: and concerning  
this, those who are professed do solemnely <sup>c. 3. §. 3.  
& C & p.  
6. c. 2. §.  
13. & 1,  
& p. 7. c.  
1. §. 3. &  
E. 7. p.  
const. c.  
1. §. 1. &  
B.</sup>  
make a fourth vow of particular obe-  
dience vnto the Popes Holines, to go rea-  
dily and willingly without alledging any  
excuse, vnto any part of the world where  
His holines shall send them, without de-  
manding any temporallities either by  
themselves or others, for their charges  
of their iourney on the way, or for their  
maintenāce when they are arriued there;  
but that they will go either by horse or  
foot, with money, or without it, begging  
and liuing on almes as it shall seeme best  
vnto his Holines. And our B. Father de-  
clares in the same place that the end and  
intention of making of this vow was to  
come more nearer to the will of God, for  
as much as the first Fathers of the Society  
being for the most part of diuers nations  
and prouinces, and not knowing in what

part of the world to imploy their labours, so as they might be best pleasing to Almighty God, whether among the faithfull or Infidells, to arrive to a certaine knowledge of the will of God, they made this vow to his Vicar heare on earth, to the end that he might dispose of them throughout the world, according as he should iudge it to be most requisite for Gods greater glory. But those of the Society, saith he, ought in no wise to intermeddle themselves, or procure to be sent, and abide more in one place then another, but they are to remaine wholly indifferent, leaving the free and intire disposition of themselves in the hands of their Superiors, who governe them in the place of God, as may be most for his service and greater glory.

And that we might perceive what an absolute indifferency and readines to go vnto any country of the world, where holy obedience might dispose of vs, our B. Father requires; we read in his life, that F. James Laynes once said vnto him that he felt a great desire in himselfe, to go vnto the Indies to procure the saluation of those blind Infidels, who were lost for want

Lib. 5. c.  
4 vita P.  
N. Ignat.

want of Euangelical labourers. to whom our B. Father answered that for his part he had no such desire, and being ask't the reason, he said, because that we in hauing made a vow of obedience to his Holines, to go vnto any part of the world where he shall send vs for the seruice of Almighty God, ought to be intirely indifferent, and not to haue any inclination more to one place then to another; and he added more ouer if I did perceauē my selfe as you inclined, to go vnto the Indies; now, I should bestow all my indeauours, to bend my inclination to the contrary, that so I might arriue to that perfect indifferency and equality, which is required to the obtaining the perfection of obedience.

Notwithstanding we doe not say that the desires which we may haue of going to the Indies, be either ill, or imperfect, for they are so farre from that, as they are both good and holy, and as such, it is good to propose and present them to our Superiors whensoever our Lord shall please for to inspire them, and so our B. Father, in the same place sayes that the Superiors with good reason may be much

7.p.cōst.  
c.2. lit. 1.

comforted when such desires are proposed vnto them, by any of their charge, seeing that they are most commonly the signes, that such are called vnto it by Almighty God, and so they come to be disposed of with greater sweetnes and more gentlenes: but we haue said it vnto the end that we might perceiue the readines and indifferency which our B. Father requires of vs, to go and remaine in what part of the world so euer; seeing that he would not so much as haue vs affected more then ordinary vnto a mission so laborious and so much importing the seruice of Almighty God, as that; and that vnto the end that our inclination to any particular thing, might not set any barre betwixt vs and that promptitude and indifferency which we ought to haue to any other thing, or place, besides vnto which Obedience might thinke fit to send vs.

From hence there may be some consequences drawne forth, which may helpe vs better to comprehend this same. The first is, that if the desire of going for the Indies, should be occasion to him who doth conceiue it, of failing in any point of this readines and indifferency vnto any other



other thing, which obedience might appoint him, that then it is **not good**, but an imperfection: if I were taken with so great desire, and weare so set vpon going to the Indies or els where, that it should disquiet me, and be the occasion that I should remaine with lesse contentment either heere or in any other place where obedience should dispose of me, and that I did not discharge with that willingnes those present functions in which I were imployed, neither performed them with due application, by reason my eyes and thoughts were fix't vpo that other thing; then it is most apparant, that such desires are neither good, nor proceeding from God Almighty, since they are impediments vnto his will, and God cannot be contrary to himselfe: as also because the desires and inspiratiōs of the holy Ghost, do not vse to go accompanied with trouble and disquietnes but with a profound peace and tranquility. And this is one of the signes which the masters of spirituall life do giue, to know whether our inspirations and desires be proceeding from God or no.

Secondly it followes from hence that

he who should haue an vniuersall disposition, both prompt and indifferent to transport himselfe into any part of the world, or to performe any thing which obedience should prescribe, although he felt in himselfe no such particular inclination as others haue of going to the Indies, or any other country remote or neer, hath no reason to trouble himselfe therefore. seeing that he is no waies in the worse state, but rather the better disposed, it being such a disposition as our B. Father requires of all the Society, to haue of our parts no affection or particular desire, more vnto one thing then an other; but he would haue vs in a disposition answerable to the tongue, of a ballance which inclines no more to one side then an other; and of this sort are many, or according to my opinion the greater part. Our B. Father had taken a deliberation once to send F. Natalis in a certaine mission, and to proceed in it with the more sweetnes, he desired before to know his inclination. F. Natalis by letter answered him, that for his part he was inclined to nothing, but only to this, to haue no particular inclination of his owne, and this disposition

our B. Father esteemed for the best of all, and the most perfect: and that with good reason, for that other seems only to be fastned to one thing alone, but this with his indifferency is imbracing all whatsoever may be commaunded him, and is prepared & disposed with an equall mind vnto all alike; and for as much as God regards only the heart and will of a man, which before him, is as much as the worke it selfe, therefore this ready will for all, is as acceptable to him as the execution of all would be.

And to declare this more fully, if any one who were tepide, pusillanimous or vnmortified, should haue no desire of going to the Indies, by reason of his want of courage and resolution, to leaue those commodities which here he imagins himselfe to haue, or to be in the way of obtaining, or els because he hath no will, to expose himselfe to those many labours which there he must vndergoe, in this man I say such a disposition is selfe loue and imperfection, but one who forbears not to desire it, out of any faintheartedness, or lesse will and courage to vndertake those labours, and others yet more pain-

full for the loue of God, and saluation of soules, but onely because he is vncertaine whether it be the will of God to dispose of him that way, or in any other thing, and is in himselfe both ready and prepared to performe any thing which he shall know to be the will of God, and would go for the Indies or England or any other place if he should chaunce to be sent, with as prompt and good a will, and perhaps better then if himselfe had requested and desired it; and that because then he should haue more assurance that he did not his owne will in it, but purely the will of God. There is no doubt, but this mans disposition were better and more perfect, and such as these the Superiors neuer doubt, to dispose of, either to the Indies, or any other place.

But to returne to the principallest point of all, our B. Father requires that we should all remaine with an equall indifferency & resignation to remaine as willingly in one place as another, to go as readily to this country as to that, and that no respect of corporall health should be sufficient to take vs from this indifferency. It is said in the third part of our Cōstitutions, that it belongs vnto our vo-

cation and Institute, to go and remaine in any part of the world, where the greater seruice of God and the greater good of soules may be hoped for; but yet if it should be found by experience that ones health were much impaired, and that the aire and Climat did not agree with him: that then the Superior might consider whether it were better that such an one, should be disposed of to an other place, which might be more agreeable to his health, and where he might with more profit imploy himself vnto Gods seruice, and the good of soules; Neuertheles it is declared expressely, that the diseased person, is in no wise to demand to be removed, or to shew himselfe to haue any inclination therunto but to leaue all the care of it, to his Superiors. *Non tamen erit ipsius infirmi, huiusmodi mutationem postulare, nec animi propensionem ad eam ostendere, sed Superioris cura id relinquitur.* It is no little thing, but a point of high consequence which our B. Father, requires of vs; seing that each one, is to be resigned and mortified, not only in not demanding to be removed, but also in not shewing themselves to haue any inclination therunto, although they should

continue ill disposed and sickly all their liues. So that for as much as concernes our mission to the Indies, or among the Hereticks, each one, as we haue said, may freely propose his inclination and desire, so as it be with indifferency and resignation: but in this point of health, there is not permitted any liberty, either to aske our remouall or to shew our selues inclined therunto, which is much more then the other; only it is permitted, that if any one finde himselfe sick or ill disposed, he may propose to the Superior, his sicknesse and indisposition, with his disability to discharge his functions, and thus much we are obliged to do by Rule; but hauing once proposed it, we are to do nothing more, it belonging only to the Superior to aduise, if supposing he be so ill disposed, it were not fitter to send him to some other place, where by recouering his health he might be enabled to do more; or whether it were not to Gods greater glory, that he should still remaine in the same place, although he performed not so much or perhaps nothing at all, for this concernes him nothing. Euery one is to suffer himselfe to be guided by his Superior,

perior, who in the place of God hath the disposing of him, and to esteeme what so euer he shall ordaine, to be the best, and most conferring to the seruice of Almighty God. How many are there who only to get their liuing do liue here and in other places which are most contrary to their health? how many are there who passe the seas to the Indies and Turkv for a litle gaine, and put not only their health but also their liues in daunger? What great matter is it then, if we (who are Religious) do so much for God, and for obedience, as those of the world do, to gather wealth together? And if it should occurre vnto your mind, that you could do somewhat in an other place, or perhaps very much, and that there where you are your health is impairing, and your labours nothing, do but remember that for all this, it is better for you to remaine there in doing nothing since it is the will of God, then to haue your owne will in being remoued to any other place, although you should doe neuer so much; and conforming your selfe with the will of God, who for the present requires so much of you, for causes which he knows best, and which it is not  
expe-

In the Chronicles of the Order of S. Francis we read how S. Francis gaue leaue to Brother Giles, to go where he would, and to liue in whatsoeuer Prouince or Couent he pleased, leauing him to his owne free election as being one whom he knew of great vertue and sanctity, but the holy man, had not liued fower dayes in this manner & freedome, but he found the tranquility and peace of his soule sensibly diminished, and in lieu thereof a great disquietnes and perturbation in his mind; whereupon he went to S. Francis againe and desired him with much earnestnes, that he would appoint him to liue in some certaine place & Couent, and not leaue him any more vnto his owne free choyce, assuring him that he could find no rest nor comfort, in such a wild and vnlimited obedience; Good religious men ought to haue no peace and contentment in performing their owne wills, and so consequently to haue no desire to remaine and dwell in this Colledge or in that, in this or the other Prouince, but they are to expect vntill holy obedience do take them by the hād,  
and



*with the will of God.* Chap. 13. 141  
and dispose of them, according as the  
pleases, as knowing that such is the will  
of God, in which they are only to take  
all pleasure and content.

## THE XIV. CHAPTER.

*Of that indifferency and conformity with  
the will of God, which Religious men  
are to haue, concerning those offices &  
functions in which obedience shall im-  
ploy them.*

**W**E ought likewise to haue this in-  
differency & resignation, wher-  
of we haue spoken, in all those functions  
and offices, in which we may be employed  
by obedience: we perceauē well how  
many and diuers those offices and fun-  
ctions are in a Religious Order, and  
each one in particular is to go considering  
of them, vntil we haue brought our selues  
vnto an indifferency for all, Our B. Fa-  
ther says in the constitutions, and we haue  
it likewise in our Rules, that in exercising  
abiection and humble offices, we are more  
readily to accept of those, from which  
we

we haue the greatest auersion, if it should be inioyned vs to exercise our selues in them, we haue most need of resignation and indifferency, in point of these meaner and abiect offices, by reason of the naturall repugnance which we haue against them: and therefore he doth more, and shewes a greater vertue and perfection, who offers himselfe vnto God to performe these offices, then he who should make choyce to do more high and honourable ones. If one who had a great desire to serue some nobleman, should present his seruice in such manner vnto him, as to remaine all his life his drudge or lackie, if he should thinke it fit, it is most apparant that he should do more, and declare a greater will to serue that nobleman, then one who should make offer of himselfe, to be his Gentleman of the horse or steward of his house; since this is rather to demaund a benefit, then present his seruice: and moreouer, the others affection to his seruice would appeare the more. if offering himselfe vnto those humble offices, he had sufficient tallent to performe more honourable ones. And it is euen so in Religion, if you should offer vp your selfe

self to God, saying ô Lord I desire to serue you in quality of Preacher, or Diuinity Master, the matter were not much, seing these high and honourable offices, vse for themselues to be sought after and desired, and therfore you declare in this no great desire of seruing God; but when you offer your selfe to serue all the daies of your life in the house of God, in cōtemp-  
tible & base offices, repugnant vnto sense, then you doe giue a testimony indeed of the great desire you had to serue almighty God, and this desire would be the more gratefull & meritorious, the more fit and able you were for the discharge of higher functions. And this were enough to stire you vp to the desire of humble and abiect offices and to seeke after them, especially seing indeed that in the house of God there is no office which is vile and abiect: for (as they say commonly) if in the pallace of an earthly King there is nothing accounted base, but his title ennobleth all, and there is great account made of seruing him in the meanest quality, how much more ought we to esteeme of all things belonging to the seruice of God, to serue whom, is properly to raigne?

S. Basile to stire vs vp vnto the affectionate loue of humble and abiect offices, sets the example of our Sauour before our eyes, who as we read in the holy scripture, did imploy himselfe in the like offices, as in washing the feet of his Apostles, and not only in that, but also for a long time together in seruing his most holy Mother and S. Ioseph, being subiect and obedient vnto them in all whatsoever they commaunded him; *Et erat subditus illis*. From the twelfth yeare of his age vntill he was thirty yeare old, the holy scripture makes no other mention of him, but only this, that he was subiect vnto them; which the holy Fathers considering do excellent well infer, that in that time he serued and helped them in many lowly and humble offices, as considering their pouerty we may piously imagine. *Ne dedignetur facere Christianus quod fecit Christus*, let not a Christian & much lesse a Religious mā, thinke much & disdain to do those things which Christ hath done: since the sonne of God hath not refused to imploy himselfe in these contemptible offices for the loue of vs, let not vs make any difficulty to be exercised in them, for  
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*With the will of God.* Chap. 14. 145  
the loue of him although we should continue in them all our liues.

But to come nearer yet vnto our purpose, one of the principall reasons, and powerfullst motiues which should incite vs to accept with great readines whatever office obedience should impose vpon vs; is to consider that it is the will of God, because as we haue said heretofore, it ought to be all our comfort and consolation in all our imploiments, that we performe the will of God in doing them: this is that alone which ought to suffice and content a soule; it is the will of God that for the present I should do such a thing: behould now you know the pleasure of God, and are not to seeke after any thing besides, seing there is nothing better or more sublime then the will of Almighty God; Whosoeuer should go on in this manner, would not esteeme it to import any thing, whether they enioyned him this, or that to do, or employed him in an eminent or abiect office, since there would be no difference vnto such an one.

S. Hierome relates an example very fitly seruing for this present subiect, he  
K sayes

sayes that visiting those holy Mōks who liued in the desert, he saw one whom the Superior had commaunded (both for his owne aduancement in perfection, as also to giue an example of obedience vnto the younger sort of Religious) to carry twice a day, a mighty stone three miles, vnto no other end, and for no other profit, but to obey and mortify his proper iudgment, and this had he already done for eight whole yeares together. This saith S. Hierom would appeare vnto those who do not know the true value of the vertue of obedience, and haue not attained vnto this purity and simplicity, but are yet of proud and hauty minds, but a childish thing, or an idle action, and they would demaund of him, how he could indure to be so imployed by obedience, and euen I my selfe (saith this Saint) did question him and desire to know what motions he felt within his heart, whilst he was performing this; and the blessed man answered him, I am as content and glad when I haue executed this, as if I had done the most high and important thing as they could haue commaunded me: and S. Hierom sayes that this answer did so  
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liuely touch him, that from that time forwards he began to lead the life of a Religious Monke. This is to be a Religious man indeed, and to lead an answerable life vnto their state, not to regard what the exterior action is, but to make the will of God our pleasure & delight, which we performe in doing of that acte: and such as they, are those who profit and go sensibly forwards in vertue and perfection, so as euen to make it their liues sustenance to do the will of God, wherewith they are nourished as with the very fatnes of the corne. *Et adipe frumenti satiat te.*

But some one perhaps will say, for my part I see well enough that it is a thing of great perfection, to doe the will of God in euery thing, and that in euery office in which they do imploy me, I may performe his holy will, but neuerthelesse I would willingly be applied & set to more important things, and be executing the will of God in such functions as those; and this is to be wanting euen in the first principall, seing that really it is nothing els, then to desire that God should do your will, and not to indeauour to accomplish his. I am not to prescribe any law to God,

neither to seeke to bring him to consent vnto that which seemes best to me, and is most to my desire, but I ought to follow that which God Almighty shall ordaine and thinke the best, and accomodate my selfe to that which he desires concerning me. S. Augustin saith excellent well: *Optimus minister tuus est, qui non magis intuetur hoc à te audire quod ipse voluerit, sed potius hoc velle quod à te audierit*, he is thy best seruant O Lord, who doth not looke to haue thee commaund him that which he desires, but who rather desires that which thou shalt commaund; and the holy Abbot Nylus said: *Non ores vt fiant quae fieri velis, sed potius ora sicut orare didicisti, vt fiat voluntas Dei in me*, do not pray; that that should be done which thou desirest, but rather desire as our B. Lord hath instructed thee to pray, that the will of God be (alwaies) performed in thee.

Which point is worthy to be considered, as one very profitable, and vniuersally seruing for all chaunces and contrary accidents which may happen to vs. We ought not to determine and choose in what,



what, and how we will indure and suffer, but God alone, it belongs not vnto vs, to make choyce of those tentations, with which we are to be proued, or to say. Oh if it were any other tentation then this, I would not care, but this is such an one, as I can no waies indure. If that paine which we haue, were that which we did desire, it would be no paine vnto vs; If you desire indeed to be pleasing vnto Almighty God, beg of him to conduct you by that way which he best knowes and pleaseth, and not by that which you your selfe desire: and when our Lord doth send you that which you haue most auersion from, and should be most sorry to vndergo, then if you conforme your selfe vnto his will, you imitate most neere our Sauour Christ, who said vnto his heauenly Father, not my will, but thine be done and this is to haue an intire conformity with the will of God, to make him an absolute oblation of our selues, that he may doe with vs whatsoever he shall please, when, and in such manner as he shall please, without any exception, contradiction, selfe iudgment, or reseruing any thing. Blosius recoüts how the holy

Virgin S. Gertrude did once out of her compassion pray for a certaine person, who (as shee heard) did with great impatience complaine, that God had sent her certaine afflictions which were lesse conuenient for the good of her soule, vnto whom our Sauour answered: tell that party for whom thou prayest, that seing there is none can obtaine the Kingdome of heauen, without suffering at least some crosses and afflictions, that shee had best choöse, and declare what afflictions shee should thinke most profitable for her, and when God should send her those, receaue them patiently, by which words of our Lord, and the manner with which they were deliuered, S. Gertrud vnderstood that it was a most daungerous kind of impatience, for one to desire proudly and peruersly to make choyce themselues of that which they would suffer, saying forsooth that those afflictions which are sent them by God Almighty are lesse fitting for the good of their soules, and more then they can sustaine; seing euery one is to assure himsele, that whatsoeuer God doth send him or permits to happen to him, is most conuenient for him, and for such

such he is to welcome it both with patience and conformity with the will of God. And as you are not to make choice of those tentations and afflictions which you are to vndergoe but to receaue all which shall be sent you, as proceeding from the holy hand of God, vnderstanding them to be the most conuenient for you, so likewise are you to be as farre from making your owne election of those offices and functions which you are to be employed in, but are to receaue all which obedience shall appoint as coming from the hand of God, and perswade your selfe that it is the only thing which of all others is most expedient for you.

There is added moreouer vnto this, a very spirituall point, which teacheth vs to be so resigned vnto the will of God, and to liue in such confidence and assurance of his paternall goodnes, as not so much as to desire to know in what manner God shall please to dispose of vs: Iust as there are some Noblemen in the world who trust their stewards so farre as not to know themselves what their owne reuenues are, or what they haue in the house, which is a signe of their great confidence

in them, and so the Patriarch Ioseph affirmeth that his Master did with him, *ecce Dominus meus, omnibus mihi traditis, ignorat quid habeat in domo sua* behould, my Master hauing deliuered ouer all into my hands, doth not know himselfe what he hath in his owne house; in like manner also that Religious man declares his confidence in God to be great indeed, when he desires not so much as to know, how God shall be pleased for to dispose of him, but saith, I am in a good hand, and that is enough for me; *in manibus tuis sortes meae* in that I am most contented and assured, and more then that I haue no need to know.

Concerning those who aspire to higher degrees, places and functions perswading themselves that they should more profit their neighbours by them and aduance the seruice of Almighty God, let them assure themselves that they are farre deceaued if they thinke they doe it out of zeale of Gods greater seruice and the good of soules, for it is farre otherwise; they are caryed away only with the zeale and the desire of honour, of their owne esteeme, and priuat commodities and because such  
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an office or function is most agreeable to their owne desire and inclination, therefore they seeke after it with so much earnestnes, which may clearly be perceaued from hence: if you were a secular in the world, or a single man, it seemes it might become you for to say, this is better then that other, and affords more profit for the good of soules, and therefore I desire to imbrace this and to let that alone, seing that I suffice not to the discharge of both, but in Religion there is no leauing one thing for an other, but it is necessary that both be done, here we are to Catechise as well as to preach; to teach Grammer as well as Diuinity, and this is only the point: if you will keepe aloft, and do nothing but the most high and eminent things, an other of necessity must abase himselfe and do those meaner ones, and if you had but the least humility in you, you should rather desire that those high & glorious functions should be cōferred vpon some other man, & ought to perswade your selfe, that he would discharge them better then you could do, and with more fruit, and lesse danger of vanity.

For this cause and diuers other. Our B.  
Father

Father S. Ignatius, hath left vs an excellent lesson, which he hath set for the foundation of elections in those his three degrees of humility, where the third and the most perfect is, that when two things do present themselves vnto vs, both equally making for the service and glory of God, one should make choyce of that, in which he might haue a greater occasion of being contemned and scorned, thereby to imitate more nearly the life of our Sauour Christ, who, for our sakes was content to be despised and had in no account. In which there is yet another great good to be considered; which is, that in these humble and abiection things, our proper interest is lesse by farre, and a man hath no reason for to seeke himselfe, or cause to feare his becoming vainly proud, which daunger goeth alwaies accompanied with those higher and more resplendent offices; In humble and abiection offices, we can alwaies iointly exercise humility and charity, and they afford humility its proper nouriture, with those slight acts which are exercised in them, but in more higher functions, charity without daunger of humility cannot be exercised, which  
ought

*with the will of God. Chap. 14. 155*  
ought alone to be a sufficient reason why  
they were not only to be desired, but ra-  
ther with great feare to be auoided by vs.

## THE XV. CHAPTER.

*Of the conformity which we are to haue  
with the will of God, touching the di-  
stribution of Tallents, and naturall  
gifts.*

**E**Very one is to be well content, with  
those Tallents which God hath cō-  
municated to him, of vnderstanding, wit,  
sufficiency, and other parts which God  
hath bestowed vpon him, and not to be  
troubled and afflicted if he haue not so  
much ability as an other, nor so many  
good parts, or be not so fit for great and  
high imployments, it is a thing of which  
we all stand in need, for let vs graunt that  
one makes greater shew, and seemes in  
some certaine things to excell and haue  
the preeminence of others, notwithstanding  
they haue some wants or other suf-  
ficient to abash and humble them, where  
in they haue need of this conformity. And  
therefore it is good for to go well prepa-  
red,

red, for the Diuell most commonly assaults vs in nothing more. In time of your studies when you see one of your Concurrants grow excellent, that he disputes and argues learnedly and well, you shall be ouertaken perhaps with a certaine kind of enuy, which although it arriue not to make you sorrow for your brothers good (for that were expresse the sinne of enuy) notwithstanding shall bring you at the last, vnto a certaine sadnes and melancholy, to see an other get the start of you, with his fine wit, and your selfe cast behind, not being able to keepe pace with him, or shew your head amongst the foremost of them, this I say wil make you droope and conuerse with them confounded and ashamed, whence you will fall into languor & wearysomnes, and be moued with a tentation to giue ouer your studies, and perhaps sometimes to take leaue of your Religion if you be not well grounded in humility, as diuerse haue giuen a lamentable experience. An other thinks to become eminent, and to surpasse all others of his course and to be famed for the best scholler throughout all the country: who when he sees all his dreames and hopes to be come to nothing, becometh so shamed,



discouraged and mortified, as the Diuell who is neuer wanting to so faire occasiōs perhaps will put him in the head, that he shall neuer recouer the disgrace, nor be rid of his melācholy as long as he tarryeth in Religion, and this tentation is no new but a very ancient one.

We read an exāple of this kind in the Chronicles of the Order of S. Dominicke, & it is of Albertus Magnus, who was the Master of S. Thomas of Aquin. The said Albertus when he was a little child, was very deuout vnto our B. Lady, and recited certaine prayers vnto her honour euery day, he afterwards by her fauour & intercession being but sixteē yeare old, was admitted into the Order of S. Dominicke, whē (as it is said) in those his tender yeares being applyed to his studies his wit was but reasonable or rather indeed he was wholly dul and vnfit for learning, & being among others who had liuely & excellent wits, he was so discouraged with the small profit which he made, that this sorrow of his, being clostly followed with a strōg tē-tatiō, did put him in such dāger, as he was vpon the point of casting of his habit: he being in this distresle of thoughts, was wō-droully

derously helped by a certaine visiō, foras  
he slept one night, he imagined that he  
had reared a Ladder against the Mona-  
stery walls, and was going out and leauing  
the order, when climbing vp he sa w fowre  
venerable Matrons standing on the top,  
of whom one seemed to be mistrise of the  
rest, and when he was come cloffe by the,  
one of those Matrons shou'd him backe  
againe and would not permit him to go  
out of the Monastery; notwithstanding  
he aduentred once againe, and being euen  
at the top, the second serued him as the  
first had done, and when the third time,  
he assayed to get vp againe, a third of  
those Matrons demaunded of him, why  
he had such desire to leaue the Mona-  
stery, vnto whom he answered, with a  
face al blushing with shame, because Lady  
I see my companions of the same course  
with me, to profit in the study of Philo-  
sophy whilst I spend my time and labour  
all in vaine, which shame grieues me  
so much as it makes me resolue to leaue  
my Religion, vnto whom the Matron  
said, pointing him vnto the fourth of  
them, behould this is the Mother of God,  
and Queene of heauen, vpon whom we  
with

with reuerence do attend, comend your selfe to her, and we with our intreaties will second you, that she would intercede vnto her B. Sonne for you, vnto the end that he would bestow vpon you, a witt sodocile as might render you fit to go forwards in your studies; which Albertus hearing was wondrous glad, and being conducted vnto our B. Lady by this Matron, she receaued him gratiouly, and demanded of him what he desired and wished for with so much earnestnes? he answered, some degree of excellency in Philosophy, which was the study to which he then attended, although he comprehended nothing of it. Whereupon the Glorious Virgin answered, be of good cheere and courage, and study well, and I will assure you, you will become an eminent and learned man in the science of Philosophy, but to the end that you may know, said shee, that it is a donatiue only of my fauour, and not attained by any naturall parts, or industry of your owne, some time before you dy, you shall come to forget whilst you are in your publique lecture, all the learning which you had before. With this vision was he greatly com-

comforted, and from that time he profited so greatly in his studies, not only in Philosophy but also in Diuinity & knowledge of the holy Scriptures, as nothing can better witnesse then those works which he hath left behind: & three yeares before his death, as he was actually teaching at Collen, he wholly lost all memory of euery thing which belonged to learning, remaining as ignorant, as if he had neuer in his life so much as knowne the first rudiments of any Science; & it may be also that it is so befallne him, in punishment of his want of indifferency, & conformity with the will of God, in point, of that tallent and sufficiency which he had bestowed vpon him. Howeuer, he then remembring the vilion which he had at that time when he was minded to haue forsaken his Religion, did publikely before all his Auditors declare what had passed, and therupon taking his leaue of all, he retired himselfe to his couent and there spent the residue of his time in prayer and contemplation.

Now that we our selues may not fall into this danger, it is necessary that we go preparing our selues before; and there is

no better preparatiue then a deepe humility, for such a difficulty as this proceedeth only from the want of it, when you cannot indure to be accounted the worst and last of all your course. If one should come afterwards and let you vnderstand, that you were to study no more, and that you were to breake of your course, and all those proiects which you had fancied to your selfe; and in the meane time you should see your Companions go on with their Diuinity, and become learned and famous preachers: here now without doubt were need of profound humility, and a great resignation to the will of God. And this tentation comes to be renewed againe after your studies are done, when you will not want such thoughts as these to be working vpon you againe: why am not I so learned, and in as high place as he? why am not I an excellent Preacher? why haue not I such a grace in setting myself forth, and in discoursing as this or the other hath? wherefore am not I imployed in important businesse, and why do they make so little account of me? and the like is to be said of those who are not scholars, for you shall haue them busied with

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such

such thoughts and tentations as these. Oh that I were a scholler? that I were a Priest and had but learning to be profitably imployed in the helpe of soules, and sometimes it may fall out that such a tentation as this, may bring you to such straits as to in danger the losse of your vocation, and perhaps your saluation too, as the lamentable falls of others do testify.

This is a generall doctrine, and euery on may apply it to his owne state of life, and therefore it is necessary for euery one to conforme himselfe vnto the will of God in being content with that Tallent which he hath receaued from God, and that state of life which he hath placed him in, without desiring to be more, then what God Almighty hath ordeined him for to be. S. Augustine vpon these words of the psalme. *Inclina cor meum in testimonia tua & nō in auaritiam*, incline my hart vnto thy testimonies & not to auarice, says that this was the begining & root of all our euil, since our first Parents in hauing a desire to be more then God had made thē, & to haue more thē he had bestowed vpon thē, came therby to fall from that state in which they were, & to loose  
all

all that which God had imparted to the. The Diuell laid before their proud desires this baite; *Eritis sicut Di scientes bonum & malum*, you shall be like Gods hauing knowledge of good and euill, and therby deceaued them, and wrought their destruction; and this vice we inherit of them by succession, being egged on with a desire of diuinity, and a kind of folly and madnes to be greater then we are; and for as much as the Diuell had so good successe in tempting our first parents with it, therefore hath he been so busy euer since to enkindle vs with the same, and set our desires on fire, of becoming greater than it is Gods pleasure we should be, without suffering vs to be content with those Talents which we haue, and that condition to which we were borne and bred. And therefore saith S. Augustin doth the Prophet desire of God, that he would giue him a heart free from all proper interest and faithfully inclined vnto his will and pleasure, and not to his owne profit and commodity: he sayes that by avarice is to be vnderstood all sort of particular end, or gaine, and not only the couitousnes of wealth, and it is this which S. Paul

1. ad Ti.  
6. 10.

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Of our conformity

affirmes to be the root of alleuill, *radix omnium malorum cupiditas.*

Now that we may attaine to this indifference, & disposition of conforming our selues vnto the will of God, and contenting vs with those talents which he hath bestowed vpon vs. as also with that state and degree in which he hath placed vs, it is sufficient to know that it is the will of God; *Hac autem omnia operatur vnus*

1. Cor. 11. 10. *atque idem Spiritus diuidēs singulis prout vult.* Saith S. Paul vnto the Corinthians,

all those things are the worke of one and the same spirit, who giues euery one his share according as he pleaseth; The Apostle doth vse this Metaphor, which vpon an other occasion we haue borrowed, and it is deriued from a humaine body, he sayes that euen as God hath disposed and apted the members of a body, euery on according as he liked best, where the foot complains not, that it was not made the head, neither the hand, because it was not made an eye, so is it likewise in the body of the Church, frō which the body of a Religion differs not. God hath disposed of euery one, in that place and office which is best pleasing to him, neither are they



*with the will of God.* Chap. 15. 165

they so ordained only by chance, but by his singular wisdom and providence. If God therefore be pleased to haue you a foot, it is no reason you should seeke to be a head; if God haue ordained you only for a hand, you do not wel in aspiring to be an eye. O how deepe and high are the iudgments of Almighty God! and who is there who is able to comprehend them? *quis enim hominum Sap. 9. poterit scire consilium Dei?* O Lord all things what so euer, are proceeding from you, and you are to be praised in euery thing; you know what is requisit to bestow on euery one, and it belongs not to vs to iudge, and be inquisitiue to know the cause why one hath lesse conferred vpon him then an other, how know you what would become of you, if you had a wit, and great abilities? how know you if you had an excellent talent in preaching, and your Sermons were followed with a great applause whether it would not be the cause of your vtter ouerthrow as it hath been of diuers others, who therby haue become proud and exorbitantly vaine? the learned (saith that holy man) Thō. de take delight to be seene, and to be esteem- Kempis.

med for such: if you with that pēnyworth  
of vnderstanding which you haue, and  
halfe pennyworth of learning which  
you haue scraped together, with that me-  
diocrity or lesse then mediocrity of yours,  
can be so vainly glorious to esteeme so  
highly of your selfe as to compare and  
perhaps prefer your selfe to others, and  
to take it heinouſly that you are not im-  
ployed in this or the other thing, and are  
not promoted aboue such & such an one:  
what would you do were you excellent  
indeed, and had extraordinary partes a-  
boue the rest? The ant gets wings & flies  
vnto its cost, and so perhaps should that  
honour you desire, proue to your greater  
losse; Assuredly had we but eyes to see, &  
were not deceaued by looking through  
those false lights, we should render infinite  
thankes to God, for hauing disposed of  
vs in a state so vile and abiect, and not  
bestowed vpon vs those excellent parts  
and great abilities: and we should say with  
that holy seruant of his: O Lord I esteeme  
it for a singular benefit, not to haue those  
many qualities, which might make me  
honoured and praised by men. The Saints  
were not ignorant of that great danger  
which

which goes accompanied with preeminency and excellency, and therefore they haue not only not sought after them, but also shuned and stood in feare of them, by reason of the great perill there was in them of lifting men vp to pride, & throwing them headlong into ruine and perdition. *Ab altitudine diei timebo*, & this rendred them so acceptable to God, who more dearly affects his seruants which are humble, then the great; O if we could but once throughly perswade our selues, and truly vnderstand that all besides the doing of the will of God, is but deceit and folly! that we could but place all our contentmēt in pleasing of God Almighty! If you in hauing litle learning, and perhaps none at all, neither capacity for any, are more pleasing vnto God, wherefore are you so desirous to be learned? why doe you wish for more knowledge and better partes? if there were any motiue to make you couet it, it should only be to serue God more faithfully, and to content him in a more absolute manner: now if God can be better serued by you, vnlearned, and without this great sufficiency, wanting those tallents and extraordinary

parts, as it is most certaine he can, since it is he alone who hath ordained it so, why are you afflicted with it? wherefore desire you to be that, which God is not pleased to haue you, & which is no waies fit or conuenient for you? Those riche & sumptuous sacrifices of Saul were nothing  
 1. Reg. 13, 10 & c. 15, 21. pleasing to Almighty God, because they were not conformable to his will: and he is as little pleased, with your haughty and high desires. Our being famous preachers and learned men, confers nothing to our good, nor helpes to our progreffe in vertue and perfection, neither our being endowed with rare partes, and hauing deepe insight in obscure and lofty things; but only in performance of the will of God, and in the discharging well those things which we haue to doe, and profitably imploying that tallent which we haue receaued; and therefore we ought not to ayme at any higher thing, since this is that only which God requires of vs.

To explicate this the better, the comparison which they bring of players, is not impertinent, where a man receaueth not his share according to the dignity of that part which he doth acte, but according

to the goodnes of his action, whence it is, that if he who played but the drudge haue performed it better then he who acted the part of the Emperour, he shall haue more applause of the spectators, and be thought worthy of a greater share by allequall Iudges; Euē so, that which God esteems meriting reward & praise in this mortall life of ours (which is but as a Comedy quickly past, and would to God it were not a Tragedy sometimes) is not the part which we play, the one a Preacher, the other Superior, this Sacristan or Porter; but the well performing of their parts: and therefore if the lay brother act his part better vnto the life, then the Preacher or Superior, he shall be more esteemed by God, & merit more applause, honour, & recompence. And as it is ordinary with the players, that he who acts in Comicke excellent well, as the Esquire errant or Country clowne hath no grace, or person for to acte a King, and yet notwithstanding he is held an excellent actor: so you perhaps are no waies fit to make a Superior or a Preacher of, and should performe with good satisfaction the office of a Ghostly Father or Coadiutor. God knowes

knowes well how to fit euery actor with his part, and appoint each one that office which he can do the best. *Vnicuique secundum propriam virtutem*, our Lord, says the holy Euangel, distributs his gifts and tallents respectiuely to the ability of euery one, and therefore one man is not to desire the part, or tallent of an other man, but all are to indeauour to performe that part well which is appointed them, and imploy to best aduantage that tallent which they haue receaued, and keepe a cleere account, and so they shall come to please God Almighty the best, and be rewarded with greater recompence.

## THE XVI. CHAPTER.

*Of the conformity which we are to haue with the will of God in time of sicknes.*

**S**icknesse is as well a giuft of God as health, and sent vs, by him for our tryall, correction, and amendment, as also for diuers other commodities and profits which are proceeding from it; as the knowledge of our infirmity, the discouery of our presumption, our riddance of the  
loue

loue of worldly things, and of the concupiscences of sensuality, the deadening and diminishing in vs, the forces of the flesh our Capitall enemy, and giuing vs to vnderstand that the place where we liue is not our owne country, but like an Inne which we haue taken vp in manner of passengers and wretched bannish't men, and diuers other commodities besides; & for this reason the wiseman hath said, *infirmitas grauis sobriam facit animam*, grievous infirmity makes an vnderstanding soule, and therefore we are to conforme our selues as well vnto the will of God in sicknesse as in health, and receaue it when soeuer God shall please to send it vs, as proceeding from his holy hand. One of those ancient Fathers said vnto his Disciple who was sicke; my sone be not grieued at your infirmity, but on the contrary, render hearty thanks to God Almighty for it; for if you be iron, this is a fire for to take of your ruste, if you be gould, this is a fire to try you: to render thanks to God when we are sicke, is an acte of great vertue, and worthily beseeching a true Religious soule.

Surius relats in the life of S. Clare, how  
that

that for eight and twenty yeares together shee was afflicted with grievous infirmities, in all which time her patience was so inuincible, as she was neuer heard, to vtter any complaint, or vse any murmuring speeches in those her violent fitts but shee continued alwaies thanking and praising God: and in her last sicknesse when shee was so tormented, as for seauenteen daies together she could not eate one bit, Fryer Reginald her Ghostly Father, comforting her and exhorting her to patience in so long and dolorous a martyrdome as shee suffered in so much sicknesse and infirmity; shee answered, neuer since I haue been acquainted with the grace of my Lord Iesus Christ, through the intercession of S. Francis his humble seruant, hath any sicknesse, seemed hard vnto me, any paine grievous, or any p[er]uance sore and troublesome. In this kind also is the life of Saint Liduine admirable and of great example, as also giuing great courage and comfort vnto those who are sicke; who for eight and thirty yeares together, was oppressed with most grievous and extraordinary diseases and paines, and for thirty yeares could neuer rise from that  
that



that poore couch on which she lay, or susteine her selfe on her feet, in all which time, our Sauour visited her with high and singular fauours.

But for as much as diuers particular reasons, do vse to present themselues vnder the colour and shew of greater good, vnto the hinderance of this indifferency and conformity, it is requisite that we solve and answer them. And first, some one may say, for my part it is all one to me whether I be sicke or well, only that which troubles me is that I feare I am a burthen to those of the house, & a charge vnto the Religiō: vnto this I answer, that this is nothing els then to cōdēne the Superior & those of the house, of wāt of charity & litle resignation to the will of God; the Superiors are vnderstood to be arriued to that perfection, to receaue all as cōming from the hand of God, and to conformethēselues in all vnto his blessed will, and so if God be pleased that you should be sicke, & that one should be employed in nothing els then in tēding to the recouery and the care of you; they are likewise well content, & as you beare that crosse which God hath sent you, so do they likewise sustaine,

staine, that which God would haue them beare with great conformity.

But you will reply, I sufficiently see in this point, the great charity of the Society, and nothing troubles me, but to thinke how much profit I could make in studying, preaching, & hearing confessions, & how I cannot imploy my selfe in any of these, by reason of my sicknesse. Vnto which S. Augustin answers excellent well, saying that we know not whether it were better to do that which we pretend or no, and therefore are to propose nothing vnto our selues aboue our capacity, and if afterwards we can execute that which we designed, we are not to reioyce because that which we intended & desired is brought to passe, but because in it, the will of God is done: and if that which we ordeined be not effected, we are not therefore to be troubled and loose our peace of mind, seing that *aquius est ut nos eius, quam ut ille nostram sequatur voluntatem*, it is more reasonable that we should followe Gods will, then he ours. And glorious S. Augustin cōcluds with an admirable sentence. *Nemo melius ordinat quid agat, nisi qui paratior est, non agere, quod di-*

*uina*

*nina posestate prohibetur; quam cupidior  
agere quod humana cogitatione medita-*

*tur*, there is no man doth better dispose  
of what he would do, then he who is  
readier to do nothing that the diuine au-  
thority may forbid, then desirous to do  
that which in his owne thoughts he in-  
tends. We are then to determine and dis-  
pose of things with such indifferency, as  
to be alwaies prepared to conforme our  
selues vnto the will of God, if by any  
chance our pretensions might be crossed;  
and so we should neuer be grieved or  
troubled, if through sicknes or any other  
casualty, we could not bring that to passe  
which we had purposed, although the  
thing in it selfe were of neuer so great  
consequence for the good of soules, Ma-  
ster Auila writing vnto a Priest visited  
with sicknesse saith wondrous well: doe  
not consider so much what you could do  
if you were well, as how pleasing you  
should be to God, in being well content  
for to be sicke, and if you seeke purely  
the will of God (as I suppose you do) what  
matter is it, whether you be sicke or well  
seeing that his will alone is all our good?

S. Chrysostom saith that holy Iob did  
merit

Iob. 1. 21

merit more and did please God more in this. *Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est, sit nomen Domini benedictum*, it is so false out, as it hath pleased God, be his name (euer) blest, and in conforming himselfe in all his miseries, sufferings and that lothsome Leprosy which God sent him, vnto his holy will, then in all the Almes and good workes which he did whilst he was in health and full prosperity: and so in like manner you shall please God more by following his will whilst you are sicke, then in all which you could do if you were well. S. Bonauenture sayes the

Iob. 1. 21

Bonau.

de grad

virt. c. 24.

&amp; lib. de

perfect.

Relig. c

37. hoc

refert ex

Diuo

Gregor.

psal. 15.

a.

same; *Perfectius est aduersa tolerare patienter, quam bonis operibus insudare*, it is more perfection to suffer aduersity patiently, then to performe good works neuer so earnestly, God can well be without both you & me for any profit which he intends vnto his Church, *ego dixi Deus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges*, he is pleased for the present to preach vnto you, in sicknesse, and requires that you should learne patience & humility out of it, commit all to God, he knowes best what is most expedient for you, and you are wholly ignorant of

it

*with the will of God.* Chap. 16. 177

it your selfe, if we were to desire health and corporall forces for any cause, we ought to desire it the better to imploy our selues in the seruice of God, and to be more pleasing to him; If then our Lord is pleased more, and had rather haue me exercised with sicknesse, and in suffering patiently the paine of my disease, his will be done, it is the best for me, and most conuenient. S. Paul the Apostle and Preacher of the Gentils was by the permission of God deteined two yeares in prison, in a time when the primitiue Church had so much need of him, it is not much then for you, if God doe keepe you two moneths, or two yeares, or all your life if so he pleases inthralld vnto some sicknesse, who are farre from being so necessary in the Church of God, as was that glorious Apostle S. Paul. Act, 28, 30.

Others there are, who when they are disabled by sicknesse, or long and continuall infirmity, to liue according to the community, but are inforced to accept of particularities are much troubled and disquieted, scarcely esteeming them selues Religious men, and thinking euery one disedified with them, in seing their extraordi-

M

traordi-

traordinary fare and manner of life, and especially if their disease be such as extendeth not to the exterior shew, when their sicknesse is only knowne to God & themselves, and their particularities and exemptions knowne to all; to these I answer that it is a good and laudible consideration, and you haue iust cause to haue resentment of it, but so, as not to cease in point of your sicknesse to conforme your selfe vnto the will of God, and to make your benefit of a double merit, by conforming your selfe on the one side entirely with the will of God, in all those indispositions and infirmities which he is pleased to visit you withall, and on the other by a great desire, as farre as shall be possible vnto you, to performe and exercise your selfe, in all the functions of your Order, in being heartily sorry, that you cannot be employed in that which others do, and in this manner besides the merit, of induring sicknesse, patiently and willingly, there is place in this second point of meriting as much as those who are well and lusty, and actually employed in all those exercises.

S, Augu. S. Augustin in his 62. sermon de tempore  
pore

pore, treating of the obligation which each one had vnder mortall sinne to fast time of lent, coming to speake of those who were infirme, and vnable to fast, says that it is sufficient for such as those, to eate at least with interior griefe and sorrow, sighing and lamenting that whilst others fast, they are not able to beare the company, like as a valiant souldier, who hauing been wounded in fight, hath more affliction and griefe that he cannot go to field, to do some acte worthy the seruice of his King, then paine and anguish to be vnder the Chirurgions launce. Euen so it is with good Religious men, when they are sicke, who are more troubled & grieved that they cannot performe the exercises of the Religion with the rest, then at the torment of their owne disease. But in fine neither that, nor any other thing, is to be a hinderance to our conformity with the will of God in our infirmities, but we are to receaue them, as presents directed vnto vs, from his owne hands vnto his greater glory, & for our greater good and benefit,

S. Hierom recounts how a certaine Monke beseeched holy Abbot Ioannes

Hieron.

in vit.

Patrum.

an Egyptian by nation, to cure him of a violent feuer which much tormēted him, vnto whom the blessed Saint answered: *rem tibi necessariam cupis abicere, ut enim corpora nitro, vel alijs huiusmodi lineamentis abluuntur à sordibus, ita animæ languoribus alijsque huiusmodi castigationibus purificantur*, you desire to be rid of a thing which is very needfull for you, for euen as we cleanse the filth of our bodies, with sope and lie, so by infirmities & the like chastisements are our soules made cleane and purified.

## THE XVII. CHAPTER.

*How we are not to repose our trust in Phisitians and Medecins, but only in Almighty God, and are to conforme our selues vnto his will, not only in sicknesse but also in all other things which doe accompany it.*

**T**Hat which hath been said of sicknesse, is likewise to be vnderstood, in matter of all other things which during our sicknesse are accidentall to vs, S. Basil touching this matter hath left vs an  
 excel-



excellent document, saying that we should ought to make use of Physicke and Physicians, as in the meane time to place no trust in them, as King Asa did, whom the holy Scripture therefore reprehends: *Nec in infirmitate sua quæsiuit Dominum, sed magis in medicorum arte confisus est*, he hath not sought after God so much as in his infirmity, but hath rather trusted to the skill of the Physicians, we are not to attribute to them. either our recovery or remaining still infirme, but ought to fixe our hope only on God, who sometimes is pleased to restore vs so our health by Physicall meanes and sometimes suffers vs to receaue no good by it, and therefore saith S. Basil although we haue neither commodity of Physician nor his drugs, yet are we not to dispaire of recovering our health, seeing that our Sautour Christ as the holy Scripture testifies, sometimes cured diseases by his only will, as that Leaper who said vnto him, *Domine si vis potes me mundare*, Lord if you will you can make me cleane, and our Saviour answered, *volo, mundare*; I will, be cleane, at other times he did apply certaine things, as when he made clay with

Basil. in  
reg. Fu-  
sias dis-  
putat. 55

2. p. 16.

12.

his spittle, and annointed the eyes of the blind with it, commanding him to go wash himselfe in the poole Siloe: at other times againe he would leaue the sicke in their infirmities, and not suffer them to be cured although they euen wasted their whole substance in procuring helpe at the Phisitians hands: so in like manner God sometimes restores vs to our health againe, without helpe of Phisicke, by only willing it; at other times he sends it vs by the meanes of Phisitians, and sometimes notwithstanding the consult of Doctors and applying of many soueraine remedies, God will not recouer you, to teach vs to confide our whole trust on him, and to lodge no hope in any humaine helpe. As

4. Reg. 20. 7. King Ezechias did not attribute his cure vnto that lump of figs which Esay applyed to his impostume, but only to Almighty God, so must not we acknowledge the recouery of our health, to any medecine or Phisitians, but to God who cures all our infirmities.

Sep. 16.  
12.

*Etenim neque herba, neque malagma sanauit eos, sed tuus Domine sermo qui sanauit omnia,*  
for neither hearbs nor plasters haue healed them, but thy word ô Lord the generall

rall cure of all, neither when we are not cured, are we to lay the fault on the Physicians, but acknowledge God in it, whose will is, to leaue vs in our sicknesse, and afford vs no redresse: so likewise, when the Physition is ignorant of your disease, or is mistaken in his iudgment of it (which is an ordinary thing, euen with those who are best skil'd and practised, and in the behalfe of honourable persons) you are to accept of this mistake of theirs, as also any negligence or fault of the Infirmarian, as a thing expressely so ordeined by God, and therefore by no meanes ought to say, your feauer is returned vnto you againe, through an others fault or want of taking heed, but you must receaue all as sent vnto you from the hand of God, and say it hath pleased God that my feauer should increase and that such an accident should happen to me, for it is most certaine that how euer in regard of those who are to tend you and looke vnto your health a fault may be committed, yet notwithstanding vnto God it is a premeditated thing, vnto whom nothing is by chance or casuall. Do you imagine it an accidentall thing, that the Swallows flying

ouer Tobies head, should dunge into his eyes, and depriue him of his sight? assuredly it was not, but done with deepe resolution, and by the particular will of Almighty God, to giue vstherby an exāple of patience in him, equall to that of holy Iob, and so the sacred Scripture testifies:

**Tob. 2.** *hanc autem tētionem ideo permisit Dominus euenire illi, ut posteris daretur exemplum patientia eius sicut & Sancti Iob,*  
**12.** and the Angell said vnto him afterwards.

**Iob. 12.** *Quia acceptus eras Deo necesse fuit ut tē-*  
**13.** *tatio probaret te,* God hath permitted this tentation for your prooffe and tryall.

**Abbas** We read in the liues of the Fathers  
**Stepha.** how Abbot Stephen being sicke, his cō-  
**nus re-** panion would needes make him a cake,  
**fert e-** and thinking to bake it with good oyle,  
**tiā Do-** he mistoke & made it with lintseed oyle,  
**rot. do-** which is exceeding better, and so gaue it  
**stri. 7.** him to eate, Stephen hauing tasted of it,  
 eate a litle and put away the rest, without saying any thing. An other time he baked him an other in the same fashion, and hauing brought it him, when he saw he would not eate he tooke a peece of it himselfe, to prouoke him vnto an appetite, and tasting of it said, pray Father  
 eate,

cate, the cake is very good, but finding the bitternes of it, and his mistake with great affliction of mind he cryed out and said: I am a butcher and murtherer of men, wherupon the good Father answered: sonne doe not trouble, nor disquiet your selfe, if God had not been pleased that you should mistake the one oyle for the other, it had neuer happened. We likewise read of diuers other Saints, who suffered with great patience and equality of mind, the cures which others prescribed them for their sickneses, although they knew them wholly contrary to the nature of their disease and in this manner are we to beare the faults and negligences, as well of the Phisitian as Infirmarian, and neither complaine of the one, nor lay the blame vpon the other.

It is a circumstance in which a mans vertue is discovered and seene the best, and therefore a whole house is edified, by seeing a sicke Religious man, take all that comes with an equall countenance, and with the same cheerfulness, as coming all from the blessed hand of God, and suffering himselfe to be ruled by his Superiors and the Infirmarian, as if the remembrance  
and

and care of his owne selfe concerned him nothing, S. Basil saith, you haue trusted your Superior with your soule, why therefore do you not trust your body to him? you haue put your eternall wellfare into his hands, why do you not aswell commit vnto him your temporall health, & seing our rule doth exempt vs at that time, fro the solicitude of our body. and cōmaunds it also, why do we not make vse & great account of a priuilege so much to our advantage and behofe? On the contrary, the sicke Religious man who is too scrupulous of his health, who is to exact and precise in euery thing which is administered to him, and in the manner of taking it, and the time, and who if all things be not done as he would haue them, can lightly complaine of it, and murmure at it too, disedifies very much all who conuerse with him.

Cassian,  
li. de institut. re-  
nit. c. 7.

Cassian says excellent well that the infirmity of the body, is no waies hindering the purity of the mind, but much conferring to it, if men but make their vse of it as they ought: but take heed saith he, that the infirmity of the body, doth not passe vnto the soule, if any one so be-  
haue

him haue himselfe as to make vse of the occasion of his sicknesse, to do what he thinks best, and is not tractable nor obedient; this mans corporall sicknesse hath extended it selfe vnto his soule, and the Superior will haue more to doe, to prouide remedies for this spirituall disease then for his corporall. A man for being sicke, is not to cease and neglect to appeare and to be Religious, neither to imagine, that he is not obliged as then by any rule, and that he is to make it his only care, to looke vnto the recouery and cherishing of himselfe, without once minding his spirituall progresse, or looking after it. He who is sicke (saith our B. Father in the Constitutions) is to indeauour no lesse in time of his sicknesse, to edify others by shewing his humility and patience then whilst he was in health. S. Chrysostome on these words of the Prophet: *Domine ut scuto bone voluntatis tue coronasti nos*, O Lord you haue crowned vs as with a sheeld of your good will, discoursing how during the course of this life, there is a continuall fight, says that therefore we are alwaies to haue our weapons in hand, as well those who are sicke, as those who are in health.

Reg. 50.  
Sūmarij

Chrysost.  
Psa. 5. 12.

Et

*Et agroti & sani: morbi enim tempore, huius maximè pugnae tempus est, quando dolores undique conturbant animam, quando tristitia obsidēt, quando adest diabolus incitans, ut acerbum aliquod verbum dicamus,* but this fight (saith he) is hottest in time of sicknesse, when torments on all sides do molest the soule, when we are incōpas't with sadnes, & the Diuell is ready at hand, to incite vs to utter some impatient word, or to be immoderate in making of our moane, which Seneca likewise confirms saying, that a valiant and couragious man hath as faire an oportunitie to exercise his forces well in bed, in suffering sicknes, as in the field in battaile against his enemies; And therefore the wiseman sayeth that a patient man is better then a strong: *melior est patiens viro forti*, and he who hath the mastery of himselfe, then a Conquerour of Citties: *& qui dominatur animo suo, expugnatore urbium,*

Seneca.  
epist. 78.

Prou. 16.  
32.



THE XVIII. CHAPTER.

*Wherin that which hath been said is confirmed by some examples.*

**W**E read of the holy Virgin S. Gertrud, how that one day our Saviour Christ appeared vnto her, bringing in his right hand, health, and his left sicknesse, and bid her choose whether of the shee would, vnto whom shee answered, inclining vnto neither of his hands) that which out of my whole hart I desire Lord is, that you would haue no regard vnto my will, but that your good pleasure in all may be fulfilled.

Blo. c. 11  
monilis.  
spir.

It is recounted of a certaine person, much deuoted to S. Thomas of Canterbury, how he (being afflicted with a grievous sicknes) had recourse vnto his Patrons shrine, where begging with great feruour his holy intercession for the recouery of his health, the B. Saint heard his petition, and obtained it him, wherupon he returning, began to consider attentiuely with himselfe, whether it were not more for his soules good, that he should

should still be sicke, and not being able to resolute himselfe, he returned againe vnto the sacred shrine, and there renewing his prayers againe, he beseeched the Saint, to obtaine for him of God that which should be most expedient for his saluation, when presently his sicknes returned vnto him againe and so he passed the rest of his dayes, taking great comfort and content therein, as in a thing the most conuenient for him.

*Surius.*

Surius in the life of S. Vedastus Bishop, doth bring an other example of the like nature, of a blind man, who vpon the day of the translation of this holy Prelats body, had a great desire to behould his holy reliques and consequently to recover his sight againe: when on the instant he obtained of God that which he wished, with so much earnestnes, and saw that which he desired so much, and casting his eyes vpon himselfe, he made it his petition vnto God againe that if the sight of his eyes might be preiudiciall to the good of his soule, that it might please him, to leaue him blind as he was before, and hauing made this prayer, his former blindness closed vp his eyes againe.

S.

*with the will of God.* Chap. 18. 191

S. Hierom writs now S. Anthony being inuited by S. Anastasius Bishop of Alexandria to confer his helpe vnto the resisting and confuting of the Hereticks, had conference with one Dydimus who came to visit him, an excellent scholler, but wanting his corporall sight, this Didymus discoursing rarely well of the holy Scripture in so much as S. Anthony euer prayed to admiration the excellency & sharpnes of his wit, was demanded by the Saint whether he were not agrieued, that he wanted his corporall eyes, Dydimus was ashamed to answer, at the first, vntill being vrged by him a second and third time, at last he brought him to cōfesse ingeniously the sorrow of his mind: when S. Anthony said vnto him. I wonder much that a wise man as you are, should grieue the want of that which flies pismires and ants enioy, and not rather reioyce in the possession of that, which only vses to be imparted to Saints and Apostolical men. Where out we may learne saith S. Hierom that it is farre better to see with the eyes of the soule then of the flesh.

Fryer Ferdinand de Castile in his Chronicle of the Order of S. Dominicke recounts

Hier.ep.  
ad Castr.  
cœcum.

Cre. or.  
Præd. 1.  
p. li. 1. c.  
49.

Croni.  
ord. Pre.  
3. p. l. 1.  
c. 49.

192

*Of our conformity*

counts how S. Dominicke during his abode at Rome went often to visit a certaine holy seruant of Almighty God, who liued inclosed betwixt fower walles, in a Tower of S. Iohn Laterans port. whether shee had retired herselfe, which holy woman was afflicted with a most horrible infirmity, she was called Bona, and her name was very significant to expresse her life, vnto whō God had taught the great perfection in goodnes & sanctity, to take pleasure in aduersity, and to find repose euen in death it selfe; shee suffred grievous paine and torment in her breasts, which were almost eaten vp with the Cancer and the flesh conuerted into crawling worms, and yet this life of hers which would haue been to any other the greatest of all torments, was vnto her the occasion of thanking God the more, and exercising admirable patiēce; S. Dominicke who vsually heard her confession and administered her the B. Sacrament, seeing her on the one side so afflicted and infirme, and on the other so eminently vertuous, did beare her singular affection, and on day after he had confest and communicated her, he had a great desire, to see her so  
her-

horrible and loathsome soare whose only sight was enough to affright and startle any heart, which not without some difficulty, he obtained but when shee opened her breast, and the Saint saw on the one side foule matter, the festred canker and the crawling worms, and on the other her wondrous patience and cheerfulness, he could not choose but haue great compassion of her, but notwithstanding being more desirous of that soare of hers, then of all the treasures of the world, he desired her with great instance to bestow one of those wormes vpon him, which he might keepe as a pretious relike of hers, the holy Saint would not graunt him his request, vnles he first promised to restore it backe againe, for shee tooke such pleasure in seing herselfe in that manner eaten vp aliue, that if any of those worms chanced to fall from her breast vnto the ground, shee would take it vp, and lay it in its place againe, on this condition shee did giue him one with a foule blacke head, and of a mighty life, S. Dominicke had scarcely receaued it in his hand, when it changed into a riche and orient peale his companions wondring at it would haue

perswaded the Saint to haue kept it still, but the holy soule asked it earnestly againe, and shee no sooner had it restored vnto her, but it turned into a worme, as it was before, and shee reposed it in her breast againe, where it had been bred, and nourished before; thereupon S. Dominicke praying for her, and blessing her with the signe of the holy Crosse, left her, and went his wayes, but he was not gone downe the stairs of that Tower wherein shee liued, when those cancorous and wormy breasts of hers, fell from her, and found flesh by litle and litle swelling in their place, within short time she was entirely cured, and remained; declaring vnto all that wondrous miracle, which God had wrought in her by means of his holy seruant S. Dominicke.

In the same Chronicle is likewise recounted, how Fryer Reginald whilst he was suing to S. Dominicke, to take the habit of his order and his entrance into the Religiō was concluded of, was forced to keepe his bed, through the violence of a continuall feauer, which the Phisitians iudged to be mortall. S. Dominicke toke his sicknes much to hart, and prayed vnto  
God

God continually for his health, the sick-  
man likewise no lesse solicitous for his  
owne health, did with great feeling and  
deuotion inuocate the helpe of the glo-  
rious **Queene of heauen**: whilst both of  
them, were iointly directing all their  
prayers vnto this end, the B. Virgin en-  
tered the chamber of the sicke encompas-  
sed with a most resplendent light, accom-  
panied with two blessed Virgins which  
seemed to be S. Cecily and S. Catherine  
Martyas, who attended on the glorious  
Virgin vnto the bed where the sicke Re-  
ligious lay, whom as a **Queen**, and soue-  
raigne Mother, and Mother of pittie shee  
comforted and said: what doe you desire  
that I should doe for you? I am come on  
purpose to heare your petition, present it  
to me, and I will graunt it you. **Wher-**  
**vpon** Reginald much troubled and aba-  
shed, transported with so diuine a vision;  
was in great perplexity what he should  
do, or say, when one of those holy Vir-  
gins of her traine, to free him from his  
anxiety said vnto him, commit your selfe  
entirely into her hands, for shee knowes  
better what to bestow vpon you, then  
you to aske, the sickman tooke this coun-

fell, which was giuen him with so much prudence and discretion, and answered in this manner to the B. Virgin; Glorious Lady I require nothing of you, but like as one who hath no other will, then what is yours, doe remit my selfe entirely vnto you and resigne me ouer into your blessed hands. Hereupon the B. Virgin extending of them forth, and taking from her Virgins an oyle which they had brought for that effect; annointed him with it, in the same manner as they vse to those who are annealed, and the touch of her sacred hands, had such excellent force, that he was presently deliuered from his feauer, and restored to as perfect health, as if he neuer had been sicke: and what is yet more strange; besides this so great benefit of his corporall forces, he receaued in his soule a farre more singular one, in that he was neuer from that howre forwards in any place, time or occasion touched in his person whilst he liued on earth, with any sensuall or dishonest motion.

Hist. Ecc. We read in the Ecclesiasticall History,  
 p. 2. l. 6. how among other men who flourished in  
 c. 2. that age, one *Beniamin* was of great re-  
 nounce



noune and fame vpon whom God had bestowed the gift, of healing all diseases, with no other medicines, then the bare touch of his hand, or with chaffing them only with a little oyle, and praying ouer them. This holy man, together with this great grace and priuiledge of restoring health to others, was so miserably vexed with the dropsy himselfe, as he came to be so mightily swolne, that he could not go out of his cell, without vnHINGING the dore to make him larger passage, and in this manner continued he in his cell for eight months together vntill he dyed; sitting on a wide settle, and curing many diseases of other men, with out so much as once complaining or being troubled, that he could not apply a remedy to his owne, and those who pittied him, he comforted, and said pray vnto God for my soule, and take no thought for my bodies infirmity, which euen when I was well, did serue me to no vse.

In, *Pratum spirituale* there is made Pra. Spi. mention of a certaine Religious Monke, rit. c. 10. who was named *Barnaby*, this hauing a great splinter of wood, as he went vpon the way, runne vp into his foot, would not draw

draw it out, nor suffer it to be cured for many dayes, that he might haue more occasion to suffer for the loue of God, and he said vnto those who came to visit him, the more the exterior mā suffers & is mortified, the more the interior mā is strengthened and enabled.

Serius  
in vita  
S. Pachomij.

*Serius* in the life of *S. Pachomius* writeth of a certaine Monke called *Zachew*; who although he had the falling sickness, did notwithstanding neuer remit any thing of his accustomed abstinence of feeding only with bread and shalt, neither did he omit any of those ordinary prayers which the others Religious who were in health did vse to make, but was still present and assisting at mattins and all the other howers. All the time which he had vacāt from his prayer he employed in making matts, baskets and cords, and he had so galed his hands, with drawing bulrushes and the stalks of hempe, that they were alwaies rawe and full of chaps, at night before he gaue himselfe to sleepe, he vsed to meditate vpon some point of the holy Scripture, and afterwards making the signe of the holy Crosse, ouer his whole body, he would repose himselfe, vntill

untill the hower of Mattins, vnto which he would rise with the first, and be present at all the other howers, as hath been said, and this was the distribution of time, & the ordinary exercise of this holy sicke Religious man; It chanced that a certaine Monke came once to visit him, and seing his hands so sore and full of chaps, he told him that if he annointed them with oyle, he should allay the paine and smart of them, *Zachens* was swayed by his counsell and anointed them with oyle, but the paine did not only not asswage, but it increased excesssiuely more, in so much as he was inforced to go to *S. Pachomius* to declare his griefe vnto whom the Saint answered: do you imagine sonne, that God doth not see all our infirmities and thar he cannot cure vs if he please? Wherefore then do you conceiue that God doth it not, but suffers vs to be afflicted as much as seemes good to him, but only to induce vs to leaue all care of our selues to him, and in him to repose all our confidence? besides it makes for the good and profit of our soules, he augmenting afterwards our reward and eternall recompence in an infinit proportion to these

short and petty sufferings, which he sends vs here: which *Zacheus* hearing his soule was stricken with a liuely sorrow and he said Father forgiue me, and pray to God for pardon of this sinne of mine, of hauing so litle confidence and conformity with his holy will, and hauing a desire so immoderate to be cured: and being departed from *S. Pachomius* he entred vpon a rigorous course of penance for so light a fault, fasting a whole yeare together, without receauing any sustenance, but only euery second day, and that in litle quātity, accompanied with many teares. This so remarkable an example *S. Pachomius* vsed afterwards to recount to his Religious, to encourage them vnto perseuerance in paine and labour, as also to stire them vp to confidence in God, and to correct in themselves the smallest faults.

THE XIX. CHAPTER.

*Of the conformity which we are to haue  
with the will of God, aswell in death  
as life.*

**W**E ought moreouer to symbolife  
with the will of God, aswell to  
dy, as to liue, although this point of death  
is of it selfe the hardest of all, according  
to the saying of the Philosopher: *omnium* Arist. 3.  
*rerum nihil morte terribilius, nihil acer-* Ethico-  
*bins,* death is the most terrible and bitter *rum c. 6.*  
rest thing of all: neuertheles vnto Reli-  
gious men this difficulty is either for the  
most part none at all, or much facilitated;  
they hauing already passed ouer the one  
halfe of the way, and almost all, seing that  
one of the first & principall causes which  
renders seculars so loth to die, and so ap-  
paleth them when that hower doth ap-  
proach, is because they are to leaue their  
riches, the honours pleasures recreations  
and delights, which here they did enioy,  
together with their parents, friends wife  
and children, which vseth not a litle  
to afflict them at that hower, especially  
when

when they haue not been well prouided for; Now Religious men haue long since freed themselues of all these things, and therefore they cannot be grieued nor troubled for the. When a tooth is well cleared and separated from the gummes, you may plucke it easely out, but if you go about to draw it out, without first loosing it from the flesh, it will cost you excessive paine; In like manner a Religious man, who is seuered from his friends of flesh & blood, and free from all worldly things, is not agrieued at the article of death to leaue them all, since he had freely and with merit before giuen ouer all part in them, at his first entrance into Religion; not expecting to depart with them at the hower of death, as worldlings do, who then must leaue them whither they will or no, neuer without great sorrow and griefe; and oftentimes without all merit: they rather leauing their possessors, then they who did possesse them, leauing the. And this is one of the fruites which they do reape who leaue the world to enter in to Religion. And S. Chrysostom excellent well obserueth, that vnto those who liue in the world, and are as it were chained

to the riches, pastimes, delights and pleasures of this life death is excessiue bitter and greuous; conformable to this sentence of the wiseman: *O mors quam amara est memoria tua, homini pacem habenti in substantijs suis.* O death how bitter is thy memory, vnto a man who hath set vp his rest in his owne possessions; and if the memory only of death, be so bitter vnto them, what will it be when they come to tast of it? But death is no whit bitter to a Religious man, who hath already acquitted himselfe of all, but rather on the contrary pleasant and delightful, as being an end and conclusion of all his paines and labours, and as a passage only to receaue the premium and reward for all that which here he left and abandoned for God Almightyes sake.

Eccl. 41.  
1.

An other principall thing, which vseth in this article of time, exceedingly to afflict worldly people, and render death terrible and fearfull to them, is, saith S. Ambrose, an ill assured conscience and want of disposition, which hath, or ought to haue no place in a Religious man, seing that his whole life is nothing els then a continuall preparation vnto death;

Ambro.  
de bono  
mortis  
c. 8.

It

It is recounted of a holy Religious man that when the Philition aduised him to prepare himselfe for death, he answered, euer since I haue taken the Religious habit, my whole exercise hath been nothing els; an exercise, befitting euery Religious man. A Religious state of life doth of itselfe put vs in that disposition which our Sauour requires of vs against his coming. *Sint lumbi vestri praeincti & lucernae ardentes in manibus vestris.* let your loynes be girded and your lights burning in your hands. S. Gregory say that by the girding of the loynes, chastity is denoted, & by the burning lights which they were to haue in their hãds, the exercise of good works, both which do shine forth most particularly and bright in a Religious state, and therefore he who is a good Religious man hath no reason to be affraid of death.

Luc. 22.  
35.

Greg. hõ  
13. in E-  
uang.

Tract. 2.  
c. 5.

Where we are to note one thing seru-  
ing much vnto our purpose, which we  
haue touched in passing once before, and  
it is that one of the most certaine pre-  
sumptions which we haue of a good and  
pure conscience standing right with God,  
is to be wholly conformable to the Di-  
uine



uine will, in that which concerneth the  
hower of death, expecting it with ioy  
and cheerfulness, like one who awaited  
his spouse for the celebration of his hea-  
uently nuptials: *Et vos similes hominibus*

*expectantibus Dominum suum quando re-* Luc. 12.  
*uertatur à nuptijs.* And on the contrary, it  
15.

is no good signe when death doth bring  
anxiety to any; and when in pointe of it,  
a man is not well resigned vnto the  
will of God. They vse to bring certaine  
similitudes to declare it the better, to vs:  
do you not obserue with what peace, and  
how quietly the sheepe goes to the But-  
chery without bleating, or making any  
the least resistance; this example the holy  
Scripture vseth in speaking of our Sa-  
uiour: *Tanquā onis ad occisionē ductus est,*

he wasled like a sheepe vnto the slaugh-  
ter: but vncleane beasts do nothing els but  
Isa. 53. 7.  
& Act. 8.  
32.

cry, and keepe a struggling when they  
are to be killed. And this is the difference  
betwixt the good, who are signified by  
the sheepe, and the bad and carnall men,  
reprefeted by those other beasts. The pri-  
soner who is condemned to dy, is stroke  
to the heart, at euery opening of the pri-  
son dore, as fearing the officers are then

com-

comming to take him from the prison to execu-tion, but he who is innocent, and expects to be acquitted by the Iudge, is glad euery time he heares the turning of the key, as hoping that they come to set him at liberty. In like manner the wicked when he heares the noise and stirring of the bolt of death, when sicknesse oppresseth him, when his fits redouble, is in great dread and feare, seing he hath a cauterized conscience, which makes him stand in dread that euery thing is messenger of death, and comes to carry him downe to the eternall fire of hell; But he who is not pricked with these stings of conscience, receaueth comfort from it, as knowing his liberty to be intended by it, and that he is to depart vnto eternall rest, and to a pleasure that neuer shall haue an end. Let vs do then as becomes good Religious, and we shall not only find no difficulty in conforming our selues vnto the will of God, concerning the hower of death, but also reioyce in it, and beseech God with the Prophet, to deliuer vs from this prison. *Educ de custodia animam meam,* lead my soule out of this prison, S. Gregory on these words of holy Iob: *Et be-*

*Psal. 141.*  
8.

*stias*

*Stias terra non formidabis, iustis namque* Greg. li.  
*initium retributionis est ipsa plerumque in* 6. moral.  
*obitu securitas mentis,* saith that to haue c. 16.  
 this cheerfulnes, this rest, this security of  
 conscience in the hower of death, is a be-  
 ginning of the recompence of the Iust,  
 and that they begin as then to tast a drop  
 of that delicious peace, which shall after-  
 wards like a mighty riuer ouerflow their  
 soules, and therby already relish their hap-  
 pines: wheras on the contrary the wicked  
 in that article begin to haue an essay of  
 their hell and torment, through those  
 pangs and remorses which they feele as  
 then.

Iob, 5, 21

So as it is a happy signe to desire death  
 and to reioyce in it. *S. Iohn Climachus* Climac.  
 and *S. Ambrose* esteeme him worthy of c. 6.  
 great praise, who euery day expects to dy,  
 and him to be no lesse then blessed and  
 a Saint, who euery hower wisheth for  
 death, and so we see that those holy Pa-  
 triarchs of the old Testament had the  
 same desire, accompting themselues no  
 other then Pilgrimes and strangers on  
 the earth, and to haue here no setled bi-  
 ding place: *Constitientes quia peregrini &*  
*hospites sunt super terram,* as *S. Paul* hath  
 Ad hebr.  
 11. 14.  
 admi-

hath admirably well obserued. *Qui hac dicunt*, significant *se patriam inquirere*, and therby they gaue sufficiently to vnderstand, how much they desired to be free from this banishment. and this wasthe reason why the Royall Prophet sighed.

*Psal. 119.*  
5.

*Heu mihi quia incolatus meus prolongatus.* Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged, and if those antients Fathers expressed themselues to be all of this desire, in such a time when the gates of heauen were shut, and when they could not haue present accesse vnto it; how much more are we to wish for it now heauen is opened, and the soule pure from sinne goes directly to enioy Almighty God?

## THE XX. CHAPTER.

*Of some reasons and motiues which may induce vs holily to desire a lawfull death.*

**V**Nto the end, that we may better and with more perfection conforme our selues vnto the will of God, as well in life as death, we will set downe some motiues and reasons which may induce vs to desire

desire to dy, as our better choyce: the first reason which we may haue to wish for death, is to decline the labours which are incident to this life; seing that the wise-man saith. *Melior est mors quàm vita amara*, death is better then a bitter life. Eccel. 30<sup>o</sup> 17<sup>a</sup>

We see worldly people for this cause often to desire to dy. and beseech it of God, and they may do it and not sinne in it; seing that in fine the calamities of this life are so numerous and great, that to auoid them, it is lawfull to desire to dy; One of the reasons which the Saints giue why God sends so many afflictions to man, is because there should not be to straight an affiance betwixt the world and him; that he might not so passionatly affect this life, but that we should bestow our whole heart and loue vpon the other; & sighing after it, *Vbi non erit luctus, neque dolor erit ultra*, when there shall be no plaints, nor any grieffe no more. *S. Augustin* saith that our Lord hath pleased out of his infinit goodnes & mercy, that this life should be but short, & quickly at an end, since it is so troublesom; & that the other which we hope for should be eternall, to the end that the paine should endure but a while,

Apoc. 21

4.

Aug. ser.

37. de sã-

ctis qui

est i. in

festo dñi

niũ ss.

Ambr.  
ser super  
c. 7. lob.  
10. 2.

and the ioy and contentment for euer more. *S. Ambrose* saith, *tantis malis hac vita repleta est, ut comparatione eius, mors remedium putetur esse, non panna*, this life is replenished with so many euills, as in regard therof, death is accompted a remedy and not a paine, as seruing to bring to end, so many miseries and calamities. It is true notwithstanding that worldly people do often sinne herein through their impatience, with which they do receiue aduersities, and in their manner of demaunding of God to dy, with plaints and discontents; but should they require it, peaceably and with due submission saying: O Lord if you shall please to take one out of these miseries, that time which I haue liued sufficeth me; I haue no desire for to prolonge my dayes; they should commit no sinne in doing it.

Secondly one may desire to dy, and this with more perfection, that he might not see the troubles and persecutions of the Church, and the continuall offences which are committed against Almighty God, as we see the *Prophet Elias* to haue done; who behoulding the persecution  
of

*with the will of God.* Chap. 20. 211  
 of *Achab & Iezabel*, how they destroyed  
 the Altars, and murdered all the Pro-  
 phets of the true God, and for the same  
 cause were in pursuite of him, enkindled  
 with a zeale of the honour of God, and  
 considering himsele not able any waies  
 to remedy it, he retired himsele into the  
 desert, and sitting downe vnder a tree: *Pe-*  
*trinit anima sua, ut moreretur & ait, suf-* 3<sup>d</sup> Reg.  
*ficit mihi Domine, tolle animam meam,* 19. 4<sup>a</sup>  
*neque enim melior sum quam patres mei,*  
 he desired for his soule to dy, and said, it  
 sufficeth me ô Lord, take my soule, for  
 I am not better then my Fathers (were) I  
 haue liued long enough ô Lord, take me  
 out of this life, that I may not see so many  
 euills and offences, as are committed a-  
 gainst thee. And that valiant Captaine  
 of the people of God, *Iudas Machabeus*  
 said: *Melius est nos mori in bello, quam* 1. Mach.  
*videre mala gentis nostra & Sanctorum,* 3. 39.  
 it is better for vs to dy in warre, then to  
 see the euills of our people & the Saints,  
 and he vsed this motiue to exhort and en-  
 courage them to fight. We read in the  
 life of *S. Augustin*, that the *Vandals* pas- *August.*  
 sing out of *Spaine* into *Africke*, and wa-  
 sting all, sparing not man nor woman,

Clergy or secular, neither children nor old age, a came at last to lay downe their siege before *Hippo* where he was Bishop, with a mighty Army beleaguering it about. *S. Augustin* seing so great affliction, the Churches without Clergy, Citties uninhabited, priuate houses destitute, wept bitterly in that old age of his, and assembling the Clergy he said vnto them: I haue prayed vnto God to deliuer you from these dangers, or to giue you patience, or lastly to take me out of this life, that I may not liue to see so many calamities; the last of these three God hath granted me, and presently he fell sicke in the third month of the siege, of that disease whereof afterwards he dyed. And we read in the life of our B. F. *S. Ignatius* an other

Lib. 4. c. example almost like to this. This is a per-  
 16. vit. S. fection proper vnto the Saints so to resent  
 P. Ignatij the calamities of the Church, and the sin-  
 nes which are comitted against the Ma-  
 iesty of Almighty God, as rather to de-  
 sire to dy, then indure the sight therof.

There is yet an other reason, both ex-  
 cellent good, and of great perfection to  
 desire to dy, and begge it at the hands of  
 God, which is that we may be free and



no more subiect to offend him, for it is most certaine, that so long as we are in this life, we can haue no assurance from falling into mortall sinne; as being not ignorant that others who haue receaued more fauours and graces from God Almighty then we, who were truly Saints, and great Saints, to haue come to fall; and this is one reason which makes the seruants of God, both liue in greater feare, and most earnestly desire to dy. If it be lawfull for one to wish that he had neuer been borne, or neuer had being, on the conditiō he had neuer sinned; how much more reason hath one to wish to dy, seing that sinne is a farre greater euill, then to haue no being, and it is better neuer to haue been, then to haue sinned; *Bonum Math. 26 erat ei, si natus non fuisset homo ille*; it 14. had been better (saith our Sauour, speaking of him who sold him and betrayed him, that he had neuer been borne; and S. Ambrose explicating this of *Ecclesiastes*, *Et laudani, magis mortuos quam viuentes, & feliciorem utroque iudicani qui necdum natus est*, saith. *Mortuus praefertur viuenti, quia peccare desinit, mortuo praefertur qui natus non est, quia* pec-

Ambr. s.  
18. in ps.  
118.  
Eccl. 4. 2.  
& 3.

*peccare nesciuit*, he who is dead, is preferred to him who liueth, because he ceaseth to sinne any more, and he who was neuer borne, is preferred vnto the dead, because he neuer knew what it was to sinne, wherfore it were an excellent exercise to actuate our selues whilst we are in prayer in this deuotion: *Domine ne permittas me seperari à te*, Lord do not permit me to be seperated from thee, ô Lord, if there is no remedy but I must offend thee, take me away presently, rather then leaue me in the occasion of offending thee, for my part, I desire not life, but only to serue thee with it, and if I may not vse it to thy seruice, I care not for it; this were an exercise most pleasing vnto God, and most profitable to our selues, since herein we exercise both an act of griefe, an acte of detestation of sinne, an acte of humility, and of the loue of God, and it is a request of the most gratfull thing which we can require of Almighty God. It is recounted of *S. Lewis* King of *Frâce*, that his Mother *Blanch* would say sometimes vnto him, I had rather (my sonne) see the dead before mine eyes, then euer in mortall sinne, and this her wish and desire

S. Ludo.  
Rex Gal.  
lia.

fire was so acceptable vnto God, and so much force had this her blessing of him, that it is reported of him; how in all his life, he neuer committed any mortall sinne, and who knoweth but the same petition and desire should worke & produce the like effect in vs.

And which is yet more, we may wel wish for death, not only to free our selues from mortall sinnes, but also to eschew veniall; which we so abound with in this miserable life, and that because it becometh a seruant of Almighty God, not only to stand resolu'd, rather to dy, then commit a mortall sinne; but euen to loose his life, rather then to tell an vntruth which is but a veniall sinne. And whosoever should giue his life for such a cause as this, should  
 dy a Martyr. Now it is most certaine, that  
 we canot liue without committing many  
 veniall sinnes, *septies enim cadet Iustus*,  
 the Iust doth fall seauen times, that is to  
 say; very often, and the longer you liue  
 the oftner shall you fall. Neither do the  
 seruants of Almighty God, desire to dy to  
 be deliuered only from veniall sinne, but  
 euen to see themselves exempt and free,  
 from their many faults and imperfections,

S. Tho.

2.2 q. 124

2. 5. ad 2.

Prou. 24.

16.

and so numerous tentations and calamities as they experience daily, wherefore that holy man said well ; O Lord what do I suffer when being in my prayer thinking on heavenly things, a wholl band of carnall things present themselves before me? Alas what a kind of life is this, where tribulations and miseries are neuer wanting; where all is set with snares, and compassed with enimies ; for when one tribulation or tentation goeth away, another cometh ; yea and during the first conflict also, many others come one after an other vnlooked for, how can a life be loued that hath so many afflictions, and is subiect to so many calamities and miseries? how is it called a life, that begetteth so many deaths and plagues ? We read of a great Saint, that she was vsed to say, that if she might haue her choice of any thing, shee should choose nothing but death ; because by means of it, her soule should be freed from feare of euer doing any thing, which might bring hinderance vnto pure loue? And in this manner, there seemes to be more perfection to desire to be out of this life, for to decline veniall sinnes, faults, and imperfections; then to shune the falling

ling into mortall ones, and that, because one may be moued to desire to be out of the occasion of committing mortall sinne, more for feare of hell, and out of selfe loue and interest, then for the honour of God, but to be so inflamed with the loue of God, as to wish rather to dy then commit a veniall sinne or fall into faults and imperfections, supposes a great purity of intention and is a point of high perfection.

But some one will say, I desire to liue vnto the end to make satisfaction for the faults and offences, which I haue committed; vnto which I answered, that if in prolonging our life, we did go still cancelling our passed faults, without adding to them new; It were a good desire, but you do not only, not discharge the old, but continue still heaping vp new debts as long as you remaine in life, wherby the account which you are to make growes euery day more heauy on your soule, and so your obiection hath no force at all;

S. Bernard sayes excellent well: *Cur ergo tantopore vitam istam desideramus, in qua quanto amplius viuimus, tanto plus peccamus, quanto est vita longior, tanto culpa*

Bernar.

c. 2. med.

*culpa numerosior.* Why do we desire this life so much, in which the longer we liue, the more we sinne; & the longer our life is, the more numerous are our faults.

Hier.ep.  
ad He.  
liod.

And *S. Hierom* writeth, what is the difference do you thinke (saith he) betwixt him who dies yong and old? no more but only this, that the more aged of them, doth beare the burthen of more sinnes out of the world with him then he who dyeth yong, and hath more to answer and giue accompt to God? And so *S. Bern*

Bern. de  
interiori  
domo c.  
25.

*nard* in this point doth take a better resolution and hath a saying of himselfe which in him was humility, in vs would be but truth: *Viuerē crubescō, quia parum proficio, mori timeo, quia non sum paratus; malo tamen mori, & mis. ricordie. De me committere & commendare, quia benignus & misericors est, quā de malā meā conuersatione alicui scandalum facere,* I am ashamed to liue (saith he) because I make so litle profit; I feare to dy, because I am not prepared, not with standing I had rather dy, and commit and commend my selfe vnto the mercy of God, seing he is gracious and mercifull, then be the cause of scandalizing others through

through my euil conuerſation; and this  
is an excellent reſolution. Maſter *Auila* *M. Auila*  
ſaid that whoſoeuer ſhould find himſelfe  
but reaſonably prepared, ought more to  
wiſh for death, then longer life, by reaſon  
of the great danger in which we liue,  
which wholly ceaſeth when we come to  
dy; *Quid eſt mors, niſi ſepultura vitiorum,* Ambro.  
& *virtutum ſuſcitatio?* What is death *de bono*  
(ſaith *S. Ambroſe*) but a ſepulcher of *mortis,*  
ices, and a reſurrection of vertues. *C. 4.*

All theſe reaſons and motiues to wiſh  
for death are paſſing good, but that which  
is the moſt eminent in perfection of all, is  
that which *S. Paul* the Apoſtle had, to  
ſee himſelfe with Chriſt, whom he loued  
ſo tenderly; *Deſiderium habens diſſolui &* Ad Phi-  
*eſſe cum Chriſto,* ô bleſſed Saint what de- lip. 1. 23.  
ſire is this of yours? why do you wiſh ſo  
much to be looſed from the bôds of fleſh  
& blood, perhaps to auoid labour? no aſſu-  
redly, but on the contrary; *Gloriamur in* Ad Rō.  
*tribulationibus,* your glory conſiſts ther- 5. 3.  
in: wherefore then, to decline ſinne? nei-  
ther is this the cauſe; *Certus ſum enim quia*  
*neque mors, neque vita poterit nos ſepa-* Ad Rō.  
*rare à charitate Dei,* he was confirmed 8. 38. &  
already in grace, and knew he could not 39.  
loofe

loose it, and therefore in that perticular he had no cause to feare ; In fine what is it that makes you so much desire to dy? that I may see my selfe with Iesus Christ, and this purely out of loue to him . *Quia a-*

**Cāt. 25.**

*more languedo*, he languished with loue, he sighed after his beloued, and all delay seemed long ; vntill he might enioy his wished presence.

**Bonau.**  
**tra. 6. re-**  
**lig. c. 11.**  
**12. & 13.**

*S. Bonauenture* of three degrees which he makes of the loue of God placeth this the last and highest . The first is to loue God aboue all other things , and so to

loue the things of the world , as not to commit any mortall sinne for them , or transgresse any of the Commandements of God, & this is that which our Sauour said to that young man of the Ghospell

**Math. 19**  
**17.**

*Si vis ad vitam ingredi, serua mandata* if you desire to enter into eternall life, keepe the Commandements , and this is necessary for all . The second degree of loue and Charity is , not only to content our selues with keeping the Commandements of God, but to adde vnto them the counsells, which is proper vnto Religious men , who procure to do not only that which is good , but also that which



with the will of God. Chap. 20. 221

is better and of more perfection, conformable to this passage of *S. Paul*, *ut probetis quæ sit voluntas Dei bona, & beneplacens, & perfecta*, that you may proue what is the good, and acceptable, & perfect wil of God. The third degree of Charity saith *S. Sonaventure* is, *tanto affectu ad Deum æstuarè: quod sine ipso quasi vivere non possis*, to burne with such an ardent affection and loue to God, as in a manner not to be able to liue without him. And hence it is, that a soule desireth so much to be free and loosed from the prison of its body, to be with Iesus Christ; wishing its banishment at an end, & the wall of its body which seperats it from the sight of God, to be dissolued and crumbled into dust. Such as these, saith he, had need of patience for to liue, life being so distastfull to them, and death the object of their inflamed desire.

We read in the life of our *B. F. S. Ignatius*, that he desired most ardently to be deliuered from the Iaile and prison of his body, and that his soule had so great a longing to see Almighty God, as he neuer thought of death, but his eyes were ouerflowne with teares out of pure gladnes

Ad R5.

c. 2.

Lib. 5.c.

vite S.

P. Ignatij

nes and delicious ioy ; But it was moreouer obserued that he was not thus inflamed with the desire of that soueraigne good, for his owne sake, that he might go to rest, and the ioy of that all beatifying vision, but much more that he might behold that most blessed glory, of the most sacred humanity of our Lord, whom he did loue so desire and tenderly . Like as men here on earth do vsually reioyce to see some friend whom they deerly esteem & loue most cordially, aduanced to some eminent dignity: so did our B. Father desire to see himselfe with Iesus Christ, purely for loue of him, without once thinking on his owne interest and felicity, which is the highest and the most perfect act of Charity, which we can exercise.

In this manner the memory of death will not only not be bitter to vs, but it will bring vs great content and delight; do but ouerpasse it with your thought, & consider how within few dayes you shall be in heauen, enioying that, which neither eye hath seene, nor eare hath heard, nor which could euer sinke into the thought of man, and so all shall be conuerted into ioy and gladnes. Who would

not

not reioyce when the terme of banishment were out, and all his paine and labour at an end? who would not reioyce to arriue vnto that finall end for which he was created? who would not reioyce in going to take possession of his inheritance and such an inheritance, and to the fruition of all this happines the clew of death doth lead vs?

*Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum ecce hereditas Domini*, we cannot come to the possession of our eternall good, but through the port of death; and therefore the wiseman says that the Iust man hopes in his death; *Sperat Iustus in morte sua*, it being the scale and ladder by

Psal. 126.

3.

which he climes to heauen; and it is also the comfort of our banishment; *Pfallam*

Prou. 14.

32.

& *intelligam in via immaculata quando*

Psa. 100.

2.

*venies ad me*, which words *S. Augustin*

Aug. tra.

9. super

epist. 10.

doth thus explicate, my thought and my desire O Lord is to conserue my selfe vnblemished all my life, and to make this care my song; of which the burthen shall be, Lord when shall this banishment haue end, when shall I be recalled out of this exile into my loued Country, Lord, when will you come to me? when shall I go to you? *Quando veniam & apparebo ante*

Psa. 41. 4.

faciem

*faciem Dei ?* O Lord when shall I haue my fill of seing you ? O how that houre lingers ? Oh what ioy, what rauishing ioy shall then ouerflow my heart, when they shall tell me, that this houre is come ; *Latus sum in his quæ dista sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus : Stantes erant pedes nostri in attritu Hierusalem,* I already imagine my selfe, to be standing among the Quiers of Angels and blessed soules, enioying you ô Lord for euer more, Amen.

Psal. 121.  
1. & 2.

## THE XXI. CHAPTER.

*Wherin that which hath been said is confirmed with some examples.*

Simon  
Meta-  
phrasics

**S**imon Metaphrastes in the life of S. Iohn the Almner, Archbishop of Alexandria doth recount, how a certaine rich man, had a sonne whom he loued dearly ; who to obtaine of God, for to conserue him in life and health, beseeched this holy Saint to pray for him, and withall gaue in a great summe of gold to bestow in Almes vpon the poore for that intention: the Saint did as he desired, and

at the end of thirty dayes, the sonne of the rich man dyed; hereupon the Father afflicted himselfe aboue measure, firmly beleeuing that the prayers of the Saint, and the Almes which he had giuen, had nothing auailed him. The holy Patriarch vnderstanding of his griefe, prayed for him, and desired of God, that he would comfort him: God heard his prayer, and one night sent an Angell in a humane shape vnto the said rich man, who told him, that he must know how Almighty God heard the prayer which was made for his sonnes life, and that through the efficacy therof, his sone was now liuing & a Saint in heauen, & that it was necessary for his saluation to leaue the world so timely as he did; since if he had liued, he would haue proued a wicked man, and haue lost all partage in the ioyes of heauen; he added morcouer, that he must belieue, that there is nothing which happens in this life, which is not so ordained by the particular prouidence of God, although the causes of his iudgments are vnknowne to men, & that therefore men were not to suffer themselues to be transported with inordinat griefe, but receaue

all that comes, and is sent vnto them by God, with a peaceable heart, and with an equall mind: with this heauenly instruction, the Father of the diseased youth, remained much comforted, and encouraged in the seruice of God.

Hist. The.  
bea li. 2.  
c. 10.

In the *Theban* History is recorded a singular fauour which *S. Maurice* Capitaine of the *Theban* band, did to a certaine Lady much deuoted to him. This Lady hauing but one sonne, vnto the end that together with his yeares, he might grow vp in good and vertuous manners, did when his childhood had scarcely resigned to youth, dedicate his riper yeares vnto the Monastery of *S. Maurice*, vnder the care and discipline of those Religious men, (as it was the custome of those holy times) the Fathers of *S. Maurus*, *Placidus* and other Romane gentlemen, in the age of *S. Benedict* hauing done the like, as also in later times *Theodora* mother of *S. Thomas of Aquin*, and the Count of *Aquin* his brothers, disposed in like manner of him in the Monastery of *Mont Cassinus*.) This Ladies sonne was brought vp in the said Monastery, both in learnig, vertue and monasticall discipline:

In

In all which he profited wonderously; &c was already well forward in musicke, in so much as he sung in the Quire with the other Religious, for sweetness of voice inferior vnto none, when a light feauer tooke him out of this life. The wofull Mother, at the first newes growne but to sadly acquainted with griefe came to the Church, and accompanied her sonnes funerall to the graue shedding infinite teares, although they all sufficed not to wash away the sorrow of his losse which shee freshly euery day renewed with lamenting ouer his Tombe, in most pittious manner, and much more was her griefe increased; when in the time of the diuine office shee heard the rest of the Religious sing, and missed her sonnes voyce among them, which vsed to be the gratefulest of them all. This Lady perseuering thus in her sad obsequies not only by day in the Church, but in her owne house by night, without admitting or taking any rest at all; once ouercome by wearines fell a sleep when the holy Captaine *S. Maurice* appeared vnto her, and said: woman why dost thou weepe so incessantly the death of thy sonne, admitting no measure in thy

teares, no cōfort to thy heart. Vnto whom shee answered all the dayes of my life will not suffice vnto my boundlesse sorrow, & therefore whilst I liue I will neuer cease to lament my only sonne, neither shall these eyes of mine vphold from weeping till death doth close them vp, and my desolate soule doth leaue to dwell in a body so dolorous; the Saint answered her, woeman I say vnto you, do not mourne, nor deplore your departed sonne as dead, for dead he is not, but liuing, and liuing with vs in heauen, enioying eternall life; and that thou mayest know the truth of all I say, rise presently, and go to Martins, and there thou shalt heare the voyce of thy deceased sonne, singing the diuine office among the other Religious men; neither shalt thou only enioy the contentment of it this day at Mattins, but at all other times, when thou shalt be present there, at the Diuine office; leaue of weeping then, and impose an end vnto thy teares, for thou hast more cause of gladnes then of griefe. The Lady awaking, expected with much, longing the houre of Mattins to be assured of the truth of her vision, which yet but faintly, she gaue credit



credit to: the houre at last being come, and she no sooner entred into the Church, but shee plainly distinguished the most sweet voyce of her happy sonne, whilst the Antiphon was intoned, and therewith being rendred assured of his glory in heauen, shee banished all sorrow from her, & made no end of giuing thanks to God, for comforting her with hearing euery day his Angelicall voyce, in the harmonious musicke, and diuine seruice of those Religious men, and enriching her, with a fauour and grace so extraordinary and great.

A certaine Author writeth, how a knight once going a hunting, roused a wild beast, in the pursuit wherof, he was cast behind with only one seruant with him, al the other, being eager in following of the chase, notwithstanding he spurred on a pace, and hauing lost the cry of the hounds strayed from the rest so farre, as he came '(out of all way) vnto a certaine groue, where he heard the voyce of a man singing wondrous sweetly: the knight meruailing to heare any such voyce in those desert places, knowing that it could be none of his followers, and no lesse cer-

taine that it was none of that Country people. Hauing a great desire to know whose voyce it was, entred in farther into the thicket, & discouered on the sodaine, a leporous person, of a horrible aspect, whose flesh was so rottē, as it easely dropped of, from euery limme of him. The knight much amazed at such a spectacle, confirmed his startled heart and drew nigh, and being come vnto him, in saluting him courtioully he demanded of him, whether it were he who had sung so sweetly or no, the lazer answered, sir it was my selfe, and that voyce which seemed so sweet vnto you was mine, how is it possible answered the knight, for you to be so cheerfull, in such horrible torments, the poore men replied, sir you must vnderstand that betwixt God and me there is no other partition, then this mud-wall of my body which you see, and this being once away, I shall enioy the cleere vilion of his diuine Maiesty. Seing this therfore euery day falling so fast away, it maketh mercioyce and sing with a wonderfull gladnes of heart, awaiting still an entire dissolution of it, vntill when I cannot depart to enioy Almighty God,  
the

*with the will of God.* Chap. 21. 231

the true spring and fountaine of life; from whence flow forth those streames which neuer drypp nor faile.

S. Cyprian writes of a certaine Bishop, S. Cyprian, who being in the extremity of his sicknes, lib. de mortal, and much fearing death which he saw before his eyes, humbly beseeched our Saviour to prolong his life, when presently there appeared vnto him an Angell in the shape of a beautifull young man, of comly feature, excellent personage, a shining aspect, and goodly stature, who with a voyce mixed with grauity and security said vnto him: *pati timetis, exire non vultis, quid faciam vobis?* you feare to suffer, you are loath for to depart, what shall I do with you? giuing him to vnderstand that his repugnance do depart this life was no waies gratefull vnto God; and S. Cyprian adds, that the Angell spake these words vnto him vnto the end, that he should recount them againe, and teach them vnto others, when he should be in the agony of death.

Simon Metaphrastes relates, and Surianus from him, how the holy Abbot Theodosius, knowing how profitable the memory of death was vnto man, and desirous

rous through the consideration thereof to giue his disciples occasion of farther progresse in deuotion, caused a sepulcher to be opened, and standing about it with his disciples, he said, behould the graue open, but who is there of you, who wil haue the honour to be first buried in it? and haue his funerall celebrated by vs? One of his disciples, named *Basilus*, a Priest, and a very vertuous man, being well prepared to dy, did readily offer himselfe, and falling on his knees said with great cheerfulness: Father giue me your benediction, for I (if it may please you) will be the first man for whom you shall sing the office of *Requiem*: it was his desire, and the Saint did grant it him. Then the holy Abbot *Theodosius* commanded that they should vse all the ceremonies which vse to be at the funeralls of the dead, whilst he was yet aliue, the first, the third, and ninth dayes office, as also an other seruice for the Quarantain, when (behold the wonder) at the end of these offices and the seruice of fourty dayes, *Basilus* being whole and sound, without feauer, head-ake, or any other paine, as if he had fallen into a sweet and pleasant sleep, passed out of  
this

this life, vnto Almighty God to receaue of him the reward of his vertue, and that promptitude & cheerfulnesse, with which he had wished to see himselfe with our Sauour Iesus Christ. And that we might see how gratfull vnto God, the readines and cheerfulnes was of this religious man, for to depart this life, this his death was seconded by an other Miracle; For according to *Simō Metaphrastes*, for the space of fourty dayes more after his death, the Abbot *Theodosius* beheld him cōming vnto vespera's, & singing in the Quire with the rest of his disciples, howbeit that none els saw him, or heard him sing, excepting one *Aetius*, a man of eminent vertue aboue the rest, who heard him sing, but could not see him; This *Aetius* went to *Theodosius* and demanded of him whether he did not heare their brother *Basilius* sing in the Quire among the rest? yes answered the Abbot, I both heare and see him, and if you please, will likewise procure that you may see him too, and so the next day being both together in the Quire with the other Religious, during the diuine office *Theodosius* saw *Basilius* as he vsed to do, in the Quire singing with  
the

the rest, and he pointed him out with his finger, to shew him *Ætius*, both making their prayer together, and beseeching of God to open the others eyes, that he might see him to, and *Ætius* hauing perceaued him, and knowing him to be the same, ranne with great seruour to embrace him, but he could not, for the other disappeared, saying as he went, so as to be heard of euery one. Farwell my deare Fathers and brothers farwell, for heare after you shall see me (in this world) no more. In the Chronicles of the Order of *S. Augustin*, it is related how *S. Colomban* the Younger, Nephew and disciple of *S. Colomban* the Abbot, being afflicted with a violent feauer, and drawing towards his end, desiring out of the assurance of his hope to dy; There appeared vnto him, a yong mā shining with glorious light, who said vnto him, vnderstand that the prayers and teares which thy Abbot sheds for the recouery of thy health, doth hinder thy deliuey out of this mortall prison, wher-vpon the Saint sweetly made his moane and complaint vnto his Abbot saying in woefull manner. Why do you constraime me to liue in such a miserable life as this?

and

Chron.  
ord S.  
Aug. cē.  
infra 3.

and hinder me from passing to an eternall one? after which time the Abbot forbore to weape, and prayed no more for him, and so the Religious being assembled all together, the B. Saint provided of all the requisite Sacraments, after he had tenderly embraced them all, went sweetly to our Lord.

*S. Ambrose* saith how the Inhabitants of *Thrace*, do vse to lament when Children are borne into the world, and make great feast and ioy, when as they dy; and they deplore their births and solemnize their funeralls for this reason saith *S. Ambrose* (and it is an excellent one) because their case deserueth to be pittied & lamented, who come into this miserable world; so full of woe and calamity; and on the contrary, they haue good reason to reioyce for them, when they were freed from this banishment, and deliuered from so many miseries and afflictions. Now if they who were Heathens, and were ignorant of that glory which we hope for, could do thus much; with how much more reason ought we to be glad to dy; we I say who haue the light of faith, and knowledge of those felicities, which they

go

Amb. de  
fide re-  
sur.

go to enioy who dy in our Lord? & therefore the wiseman said with farre more reason, that the day of death, is better then the day of our Natiuity, *Melior est dies mortis, die Natiuitatis.*

Ecel. 7. 1.

Hier. ep.  
ad Ther.

Ioan. 11.  
35.

*S. Hierom* saith that our Sauour when he would depart out of this world vnto his heauenly Father, said to his disciples, who were sorrowfull for it; *Si diligeritis me, gauderetis utique, quia vado ad patrem*, you know not what you do, for if you loued me, you would certainly reioyce, because I am going to my Father, and on the contrary, when he was about to raise *Lazarus* from death againe, he wept; he wept not, saith *S. Hierom*, because he was dead, seing he was presently to be reuiued againe, but he wept, because he was to returne againe vnto this disastrous life, he wept because one whom he so dearely loued, was to haue his part againe, of the woes of this miserable banishment.



THE XXII. CHAPTER.

*Of the conformity which we are to haue  
with the will of God, in all afflictions  
and calamities in generall which he  
sends vnto vs.*

**W**E are not only to conforme our  
selues with the will of God, in  
those afflictions and particular accidents,  
which do happē vnto vs, but also in those  
generall calamities and desolations, which  
are occasioned by famine, warre, sicknes,  
death, plagues, and other the like which  
God sends vnto his Church. To compre-  
hēd this the better, we must suppose that,  
although on the one side, we resent the  
miseries and afflictions, and sorrow for our  
neighbours misfortunes, and harmes, as it  
is reasonable we should: neuertheles on  
the other side considering them as they  
are the will of God, and so ordained by  
his iust iudgments, to be the seedsof that  
good and profit, which he knoweth re-  
sulting to his greater glory, in these I say,  
we may cōforme our selues vnto his holy  
will, in like manner as we see a Iudge cō-  
demne

demne a malefactor vnto death, who although on the one side, he is not without feeling and sorrow, that the man must dy, out of that naturall compassion which he beareth him, or perhaps because he is acquainted with him: neuertheles he omits not to pronounce sentence of death against him, and comaunds that it be executed, because it is so necessary and convenient for the good and welfare of the Commonwealth; and although it be true that God doth not oblige vs to conforme our selues in all these things vnto his will, in such manner as positiuely to desire and loue them, neither requireth any more of vs, then to suffer them with patience, without contradicting or resisting his diuine Iustice, or murmuring against the decrees therof; notwithstanding the diuines and holy Saints do say, that it should be a worke of farre more merit & perfection, and a resignation more entire and compleate, for a man not only to accept and endure these things patiently, but also to loue and desire them, for as much as they are effects of the good pleasure, and will of God, so ordeined by his diuine Iustice, and conferring vnto his greater glory; Imitating

S. Bona.  
sent. d.  
48. q. 2.  
& alij.

mitating therein the blessed Saints in heaven, who conforme themselves in all accidents vnto the will of God, as *S. Thomas* and *S. Anselmus* declare by this comparison, learning vs that in heaven our will and the will of God, shall in as perfect manner agree, as the two eyes of a body, one of which cannot looke on any thing, but the other likewise fixeth its sight vpon it; whence it is, that although the eyes which see the thing, be two; notwithstanding the thing which is seene doth seem no more then one. Euen so the Saints in heaven accommodat themselves vnto the will of God in euery thing, as seeing cleerly in all things the decrees of his Iustice and the end of his greater glory to which they are all directed, so also would it be a great perfection in vs, to imitate in this particular the B. Saints in heaven, by desiring that the will of God be done on earth, as it is in heaven. To will that which God Almighty wills, for the same end and reason for which he wills it, cannot choose but be precisely good.

*S. Tho.*  
2.2.q.19.  
ar. 10. ad  
1.  
*Ansel. 1.*  
similitu.  
c. 63.

*Possidonius* reports of *S. Augustin* in August. his life, that he during the siege of the  
Citty

Citty of *Bonna* where he made his residence being besieged, seeing so great desolation & slaughter which the *Vandals* made, comforted himselfe, with this sentence of the wiseman: *Non erit magnus magnum putans, quod cadunt ligna & lapides, & moriuntur mortales*, he shall neuer be great, who accounts it a great wonder, to see wood and stones fall, and mortalls dy; Now we with greater reason may comfort our selues, in considering all these things proceeding from the hand of God, and how euer the cause, why he sends these miseries and calamities be vnknowne vnto vs, yet it is not possible but they should be iust. The Iudgméts of God are profound, and a bottomles abisse, as the Prophet saith: *iudicia tua abyssus multa*, neither are we with our shallow, and scanty vnderstandings to vndertake to sound or diue into them, which would be great presumption in vs: *quis enim cognouit sensum Domini? aut quis consiliarius eius fuit?* who hath known the meaning of God, or who hath been his counsaier? It belongs only to vs, to receaue them with humility, and to belieue, that nothing either can or doth proceed, from  
a know.

*Psal. 3. 57*

*Ad Rō.  
11. 34. &  
Isa. 40.  
30,*

a knowledge so infinit, which is not wisely and holily designed, and so designed, as to haue for its end our greater good and profit. On this foundation we are to ground our selues surely confiding in that infinit goodnes and mercy of God, that he would send vs nothing, neither permit the like calamities and aduersities, vnles they were tending to a greater good. God takes this way for to lead many to heauen, who otherwise would go astray and vtterly be lost. How many are there who by means of these afflictions conuert themselves with their whole hearts to God, and dying with true repentance for their sinnes are saued, who otherwise had been damned perpetually? and so that which appeares a scourge and punishment, is a singular benefit, and inestimable mercy.

In the second booke of the *Machabees*, the Author after he had recounted that horrible and cruell persecution, of impious King *Antiochus*, the abundance of blood he shed, which both old men and children; Matrons and young Virgins vaines contributed, the pillage and profaning of the Temple, with the abominations committed there by his com-

Q

mande-

2. Mach.  
22.

mandement, concludeth in these words:  
*Obsecro autem eos qui hunc librum lecturi  
sunt, ne abhorrescant propter aduersos ca-  
sus, sed reputent ea quae, acciderunt non  
ad interitum, sed ad correptionem esse ge-  
neris nostri*, but I beseech those who are  
to read this booke, that they abhorre not  
for the aduersities but that they account  
those things which haue happened, not  
to be for the destruction but for the cha-  
stising of our stocke, by the permission  
and disposure of Almighty God.

Greg. li.  
2. mor.  
c. 32.

S. Gregory saith vnto this purpose ex-  
cellent well, the horseleeche draweth out  
and sucketh the blood of the sicke, and  
that which it pretends it to glut it selfe  
with it, and if it could, to draw the vaines  
of the sicke person dry; but the intention  
of the Phisitian is, to haue them sucke out  
all the corrupted blood, and to restore  
the sicke vnto his health againe: the like  
intention hath Almighty God, in sending  
vs aduersities and tribulations, and as he  
should do indiscreetly, who would not  
suffer his corrupted blood, to be drawne  
out of him, for hauing more regard, vnto  
that which the Horseleeche pretends, then  
to the intencion of the Phisitian, so in what  
so

so euer aduersity, whether it come vnto vs by the procurement of men, or els by means of any other creature, we are not so much to haue regard to it, as vnto God our soueraigne Phisitian, seing they all serue him in the nature of Horsleeches, to draw out our corrupted blood from vs, and to restore vs vnto perfect health. And consequently we are to belieue and know that he sends them all vnto vs, for our greater vtility and good, and although he had no other end in them, but only as childré to correct vs in this life, that there might remaine no punishment in the o-ther for vs to vndergoe, it were no small fauour which he should do vs in it.

It is reported of *S. Katherine of Sienna*; In vita S.  
that as shee once was much troubled, be- Cathar.  
cause an other had giuen false testimony Senen.  
against her, in a matter which concerned P. 2. c. 4.  
her honour, our Sauour Christ appeared vnto her, houlding in his right hand a golden crowne adorned with pretious stones, and in his left, a crowne of thornes and said: my beloued daughter, know that thou must be crowned with either of these crownes, at seuerall times, therfore choose for the present, that which you like the best,

best, either in this life to be crowned with this thorny crowne, and haue this other pretious one reserued vntill the other life for you, which neuer shall haue end, or now to haue this riche and gorgious crowne, and haue the wreath of thornes kept for you till you dy? Vnto whom the holy Virgin answered, deere Lord I haue long time since forsaken mine owne will, to embrace yours, and therefore now it becomes not me to choose, but neuertheles if you would haue me to resolute I am minded as long as I shall remaine in life, to conforme my selfe vnto your sacred passion, and will embrace all tribulations, for your deere loue and my consolation, and hauing said this shee tooke the crowne of thornes with her owne hands, out of his, and with all her might crused it vpon her head, so forcibly, that the thornes pearced her in euery part therof, in such manner, as for a long time after, the violent paine of her head, witnessed the force with which they were driuen in.



## THE XXIII. CHAPTER.

Of a certaine means which will helpe us much to receaue and support with great resignation, all those aduersities which our Lord shall send vs, as well in particular as in generall, which is the knowledge and feeling of our sinnes.

**I**T is a common doctrine of the holy Fathers, that God for the most part, doth send vs afflictions and chastisements in generall, for the sinnes which we haue committed; & it is the frequent language of the holy scripture: *Induxisti omnia hac* Dan. 9.  
*propter peccata nostra, peccauimus enim* 23. & se-  
*& inique egimus, & praecepta tua non au-* quentib.  
*diuimus, omnia ergo quae induxisti super*  
*nos, & vniuersa quae fecisti nobis, in vero*  
*iudicio fecisti,* thou hast brought in all these things for our sinnes, for we haue sinned and done vniustly, and thy precepts we haue not heard; all things therefore that thou hast brought in vpon vs, and all things that thou hast done to vs, thou hast done with true Iudgment. And so we see that God punished his people  
Q 3 and

Judith.

3. 5.

and deliuered them ouer vnto the hands of their enemies, when they had offended him & deliuered them againe, when they did pennance and repented them of their sinnes, returning vnto him againe and for this cause *Achior* Captaine and Prince of the sonnes of *Amon*, hauing declared to *Holofernes* what a particular care God had of the children of *Israel*, & how he sheltred them vnder the wings of his protection, as also how he chastized them, when they departed from his obedience, counsailed him before he enterprized any thing against them, to informe himselfe, whither for the present they had offended God, seing then he might assure himselfe of the victory, els he had better leaue of his enterprize, for he could not preuaile against them, nor come of with lesse then shame and confusion, seing that God did fight for his people, whom no man was so mighty to withstand. And the holy Doctors do particularly gather this same, from those words of our Sauour in the Euāgell vnto him who had laine eight & thirty yeares by the *Probaticke Poole* to be cured of his infirmity; *Ecce sanus factus es, iam noli*

Ioan. 5.  
14.

with the will of God. Chap. 23. 247

*noli peccare, ne deterius tibi aliquid contingat*; Behould (said our Sauour after he had cured him) thou art made whole, hereafter sinne no more, least some worse thing happen vnto thee, and in conformity to this, it will be a good means and much helping vs in all calamities and afflictions aswell generall as particular vnto the resigning our selues vnto the will of God; as also to support them all with patience, to enter presently into our selues, and consider our sinnes, and withall how iustly we haue merited this chastisement, because in this manner we shall receaue in good part, and iudge it lesse then we deserue in regard of the enormity of our sinnes, what affliction so euer shall arriue vnto vs.

S. Bernard and S. Gregory handle this point excellent well S. Bernard saith: *Culpa vero ipsa si intus sentitur perfecte, utique exterior pana, parum aut nihil sentitur*, if the fault it selfe, be but so felt within as it ought to be, we shall haue but little or no feeling of the paine without; *Sicut Sanctus David non sensit iniuriam serui conuiciantis, memor filij persequentis*, like as the royall Prophet Dauid, did

Ber. ser.  
de alti &  
Bass. cor.  
dis.

2 Reg.  
16. 1.

2. Reg.  
16. 1.

not feele the iniury of his seruant reuiling him, whilst he remembred that his owne sonne was in Armes against him. *Ecce filius meus qui egressus est de utero meo quarit animam meam, quanto magis nunc filius Iemini?* behould my sonne who came out of my wombe seeketh my life, how much more the sonne of Iemini? if mine owne sonne persecute me, what wonder is it if a straunger do the like. S.

Greg. li.  
1. mor.  
c. 8.  
Iob. 11. 6

Gregory on these words of Iob, & intelligens quod multo minora exigaris ab eo quam mereretur iniquitas tua, and thou mightest vnderstand that thou art exacted much lesser things of him, then thine iniquity deserues, explicates it with an equillit comparison, like as (saith he) the sick man who feeles his impostume inflamed and swolne and the flesh about it to be rotten and dead, is glad to put himselfe into the surgeans hands, and lets him lance and cut him as he pleases, and the more grieuous and corrupted the sore is, the more couragiously he indures the launcing and searing yron: so when one hath a true feeling of the sore and sicknesse which sinne causeth in his soule, he receaues with a good will the brand of tribu-

tribulation, of mortification and his owne  
disesteeme which God applyeth vnto this  
sore to draw the filthy matter and cor-  
ruption out of it, *dolor quippe flagelli tem-  
peratur, cum culpa cognoscitur*, for the  
paine of the scourge is allayed, when the  
fault is acknowledged: and if you receaue  
not willingly that mortification and ad-  
uersity which God presents you with, it is  
a signe that you are ignorant of the sick-  
nes of your faults, you do not feele cor-  
ruption eating vpon you, and therefore  
you cannot endure the lance, nor searing  
yron.

The holy Saints and seruants of God  
Almighty, did not only willingly receaue  
these chastisements, but they desired them  
with great instance and begged them ar-  
dently at the hands of God; holy *Iob* said;  
*Quis det vt veniat petitio mea, & qui ce-  
pit, ipse me conterat, soluat manum suam,  
& succidat me., & hac mihi sit consola-  
tio, vt affligens me dolore non parcat?* who  
shall grant that my petition may come, &  
that he who hath begun, should consume  
me, and the same would loose his hand, &  
cut me of, and this might be my comfort,  
that afflicting me with sorrow he spare  
not

Psa. 25. 2. not, and the Prophet Dauid. *Proba me*

Psal. 37. *Domine & tenta me*, and *quoniam ego in*

18.

Psal. 118. *flagella paratus sum*, & *bonum mihi quia*

71. *humiliasti me*, proue me ô Lord & tempt

me, because I am ready for scourges, it is good for me that thou hast humbled me.

The seruants of God Almighty (saith S.

Greg. li. Gregory) did so much desire that his Di-

1. mor. c. uine Maiestie should chastise them, and

7. & 8. humble them in this life, as they euen pro-

ceeded to sadnes, when on the one side

they cast their eyes vpon their faults; and

on the other, they saw that God did not

thoroughly punish them, because they ima-

gined and feared, least God should de-

ferre their punishment vntill the other

life, where with all rigour it should be exe-

cuted, and this is that which *Iob* adds, &

*hac mihi sit cōsolatio vt affligēs me dolore*

*non parcat*, & this is my cōfort, that affli-

cting me with sorrow he spares not which

is as much as to say, God vseth to spare

some in this life, that he may punish them

for euer in the next; but I desire not to

be spared in this life with them, vnto the

end that in the next he may pardon me

for euer; Let God chastise me here like a

louing Father, that he may not punish

me

me eternally afterward, like a rigorous  
Iudge, for my part I will not murmur  
or complaine of the lashes of his whipp,  
*nec contradicam sermonibus Sancti*, but *Iob. 6. 10*  
it shall comfort me the more, this is also  
that which *Augustin* saith, *hic ure hic Augudi.*  
*seca, hic mihi parcas, ut in aeternum*  
*parcas*, here burne me, here lance me here  
spare me in nothing, that thou maist spare  
me ô Lord eternally.

It is no other then our blindnes and ig-  
norance, which make corporall afflictions  
seem so heauy to vse, and spiritual so light,  
we ought not to be so sensible of aduer-  
sity as offinne: if we did but know or  
could consider the grieuousnesse of our  
faults, we should esteeme all chastisements  
to little, and say with holy *Iob: peccavi, & Iob. 33.*  
*verè deliqui, & ut eram dignus non re-* 27.  
*cepi*, words which we ought to carry im-  
printed in our hearts, and often to vtter  
with our mouthes, I haue sinned ô Lord  
and I haue truly done amisse, offending  
your diuine Maiesty & you haue not cha-  
stised me according to my deserts, all  
that we can possibly suffer in this life, is  
nothing in comparison of that punishmēt  
which one sinne deserueth. *Intelligeres Iob. 11. 6*  
*quod*

*quod multò mitiora exigaris ab eo, 'quàm meretur iniquitas tua.* he who should consider that he hath offended the Maiestie of Almighty God, and deserued to burne eternally in the flames of hell, what paine would he refuse, what dishonour, what iniury, what contempt should he not willingly vndergoe? for recompence & satisfaction of those offences, which he hath committed against the Maiesty of Almighty God. *Si fortè respiciat Dominus afflictionem meam, & reddat mihi Dominus bonum pro maledictione hac hodierna,* said David when Semei curst and reuiled him, hinder him not from cursing me, let him load me with reproaches, and giue me my fill of iniuries and scorne, for it may be that God will take it for sufficient payment, and exact no more punishment of me hereafter for my sinnes, but haue mercy on me, which is all I can desire, and all my happines. In the like manner are we to receaue willingly all confusion, shame and aduersities whatsoever, saying. On Gods name let them come, for it may be that God will be so pleased to accept of them, for payment and satisfaction for our sinnes, and so they

may

2. Reg.  
16. 12.



may turne to our felicity; if we would but employ that time, which we lauish in cō-  
plaining and bemoaning our afflictions,  
in entring into our selues, we should please  
God more, and find more comfort and  
redresse.

The holy Saints made so profitable vse  
of this remedy in the like occasions, and  
were so frequent in it, that (as we read  
of some of them, as *S. Katherin of Siena*  
and some others) they attributed all the  
calamities and afflictions which God sent  
vnto his Church, vnto their sinnes and im-  
perfections, saying, this warre is hapned  
throug my procurement, my sinnes are  
the cause of this plague and affliction,  
which God doth send, they beeleeuing  
verely that their sinnes in particular did  
merit this and more. And we may adde in  
confirmation of this, that God often-  
times doth punish a whole nation for the  
sinne of one particular person; As when  
for the sinne of *Dauid*, he visited the  
whole people of *Israel* with pestilence,  
there dying (according to the holy Scrip-  
ture) seauēty thousand men in three daies  
space: But you will say perhaps, he was  
their King, and that their punishments, do  
passe

2. Reg.

24. 25.

Ios. 7. 45.  
& 11.

Exod. 20.  
5 & c. 34  
7. num.  
14. 18.

Ezec. 18.  
20.

patte on the people accounts with greater reason I will instance you an other for the sinne of *Acan* who then was but a priuat man, and tooke but only a trifle for himselfe out of the anathemate goods of *Ierico*, God punished all the people, in such sort as three thousand of the choyest souldiers in the campe, not being able to withstand their enemy, were enforced to saue themselves by flight; God doth not only punish others for the offences of the principall amongst them, but euen the fault of any priuat man, is enough to bring a generall plague vpon them, and in this sense the Saints explicate that passage which the holy Scripture doth repeat so often that God will punish the sinnes of the parents on their children, vnto the third and fourth generation, the fault of the Father (say they) passes not vnto his children, neither hath the childrens any reference to him. *Anima quæ peccauerit ipsa morietur, filius non portabit iniquitatem patris, & pater non portabit iniquitatem filij*, but for as much as concerneth the punishment, God vsually chastizeth the one for the others sinnes, and so perhaps for my sinnes or yours, God may punish

rea- punish a whole house, a whole Religion.

for Now let vs set before our eyes on the  
at a one side this consideration, and on the  
isse other the good pleasure of Almighty  
ods God, and in this manner we shall with  
in ease come to conforme our selues vnto  
y- his will, in all the afflictions, which he  
le sends to vs, and say with *Hely* the  
ed Priest: *Dominus est, quod bonum est, in*  
h *oculis suis faciat*, he is Master, he is Lord, 1. Reg.  
of and supreme gouernour of euery thing, 3. 18.  
n let all be performed and done as he shall  
o please, and as he shall ordeine. And with  
n the Prophet *Dauid*: *Obmutui & non a-*  
e *peruios meum. quoniam tu fecisti*, ô Lord Psal. 38.  
o I haue not cōplained, of those misfortunes 10.  
f which you haue sent me, but haue been  
e silent, as if I could not speake, and borne  
all with great patience and conformity,  
seing ô Lord they are proceeding from  
you. This ought to be our consolation  
in euery thing, God wills it, God doth it,  
God commaunds it, God sends it, in Gods  
name let it come, whatsoeuer it be. We  
should need no other reason, to perswade  
vs to take all things in the best part. On  
these words of the eight and twentieth  
psalme. *Et dilectus quemadmodum filius* Psal. 28.

*unicornium*, the holy Fathers, obserue that God cōpares himself vnto an vnicone, because the vnicone hath his horne belowe his eyes, & can see to take his aime to stricke, wheras the Bull hath his aboue his eyes, & goares with them at randome, moreouer the vnicone cures with the same horne, with which it did the hurt, & so God giues vs remedy with the same thing, by which he gaue the wound.

This conformity and humble submission vnder the rodd of our punishment, is a thing so gratfull vnto God, that oftentimes it doth alone suffice, to appease his anger, and remit our fault without punishment; In the Ecclesiasticall History we read how *Attila* King of the Hunnes, who waited so many prouinces & stiled himselfe *Metus orbis & flagellum Dei*, the terror of the world and scourge of God, drawing nigh to the Citty of *Troyes* in *Campania*, *S. Lupus* Bishop of the Citty, in his Pontificall habit accompanied with all his Clergy, went out to meet with him, and being come into his presence he said, who art thou, who ruinest and disquietest all the world? *Attila* answered I am the scourge of God, then

Gnd

Naucler.  
2. volum.

*With the Will of God.* Chap. 23. 257  
then said the Bishop, you are most welcome to vs, and presently commaunded to open the holy gates, and his soldiers entred the Toure; but our Lord stroke them with such a blindnes, that they passed cleane thorough without doing any harme: for although *Attila* was a scourge indeed, yet God would not permit him to be such to them, who receaued him as his scourge with so much submission.

## THE XXIV. CHAPTER.

*Of the conformity which we are to haue with the will of God, in aridity and desolation in our prayer, and what is vnderstood by the name, of this aridity and desolation.*

**W**E are not only to conforme our selues vnto the will of God, in thing exterior, humane and naturall, but also in that which seemes to many euen sanctity when we desire it with greatest earnestnes, to wit in spirituall and supernaturall graces, such as are diuine consolations, vertues themselves, and the gift of prayer, interior quiet and tranquility of  
R mind,

mind, and in fine all spirituall graces and fauours. But some one shall aske me, whether in all these things there may be so much of our owne will, and immoderate loue vnto our selues as may need moderation euen in point of them. I answere yes, and that from hence the malice of selfe loue may be perceaued the better, since euen with things so good and holy as these, it forbears not to mingle the poison of its infection. Spirituall ioy and consolation is very good, because by helpe of them, the soule doth easely ridd it selfe, and come to detest all feeling and delight in worldly things, which is the bait and nutriment of vices, and takes heart and breath, to go on cheerfully, in the seruice of God, according to that saying of the Prophet, *viam mandatorum tuorum cucurricum dilatasti cor meum*, I haue runne in the way of thy commandments then when thou hast dilated my heart, the heart dilateth and extends it selfe, with spirituall ioy and consolation, and on the contrary, becomes narrow and straight, with sadnes and desolation. The same Prophet likewise sayes, that when God sent him consolations, they were as wings

Psal 118.  
31.

wings vnto him, which made him runne and fly in the wayes of vertue and the cōmandements of God; Spirituall consolations do moreouer helpe very much, to the breaking of our owne will, to the ouercoming our sensuall appetites, to the mortifying of the flesh, and to beare our crosse and all aduersities which may arriue with greater constancy; And therefore God vsually doth first send these spirituall ioyes and consolations vnto those, whom he intends afterwards to visit with afflictions & desolation, the better to prepare & dispose them by the one, to make their good and profit of the other.

As we see, our Sauour would comfort his disciples with his glorious transfiguration on the mountaine, that they might afterwards be lesse troubled and deiected to see him suffer and dy vpon the crosse. We see likewise that God most commonly bestows his cōsolations vpon new beginners, that they may thoroughly forsake the delights of the world for heavenly comforts, and afterwards when he hath surely obliged them vnto him in the bonds of loue, and he seeth them well rooted and confirmed in vertue, then he

exerciseth them with aridity, that they may the better attaine the vertues of patience and humility, and merit a more abundant increase of grace and glory, by seruing God purely, without the helpe of consolation. This is the cause why some in the begining when they are newly entered into Religio, or perhaps before their entrance, when they haue but conceiued the desire, do feelee greater consolation & spirituall delight, then euer after, for God then deals with them accordig to their age, giuing them the milke of Infants, to traine them out of the world, and bring all temporall things into contempt and hatred with them, but afterwards when they are well growne and fit for harder meats, he giues them such food as doth become their yeares. For these and other the like ends, God ordinarily doth send his consolations and spirituall gusts. And therefore the Saints commonly do counsell vs, in time of consolation, to prouide against the comming tentations; like as in time of peace, they vse to make the preparation for warre: for the day of consolation is commonly no other, then the Eue and vigill of tentation.

Spiri-



Spirituall comforts are therefore very good and profitable, if we know how to vse them, as we ought to do, wherefore when soeuer God bestows them on vs, we are to receaue them, with humble thankfulness, but if any one should wholly depend vpon them, and desire them only for his owne contentment, because of the gust and delectation which the soule receaueth in them, it were imperfection in him, and disordinate loue vnto himselfe. For as in things necessary to sustaine our life, as eating, drinking, sleeping and the like, if a man should make the pleasure of them his end, it were a defect in him, so if one should pretend no other end in prayer, but these sensible feelings & consolations, it were a spirituall gluttony in him; Those are things which are not to be accepted of, or desired, for any proper feeling or particular delight, but only as means helping vs to arriue vnto those ends which we haue mentioned. Like as one who is sicke and can indure no meat that is good for him, is glad when he come to find some tast and relish in it, not because it is pleasant to his pallat, but because it prouokes his appetite to eate,

and conserues his life, so also a seruant of God is not to seeke spirituall consolation, as to insist vpon it, but because with the heauenly refreshment therof, his soule is strenghtned and encouraged to sustaine the paine and labour of the way of vertue, and to go on with constancy. And in this manner, comforts are not desired for comforts sake, but only for the greater glory of God, and so farre forth as they redound vnto his honour and glory.

But I say yet more, that one may desire these spirituall consolations in such manner, & for those ends which we haue said which are good and holy, and yet for all this there may be excesse in it, and disordinate and selfe loue may haue shuffled in it selfe among those desires; as when we desire the too importunately, with too great solicitude, and greedines, so as to be lesse content if we obtaine them not, and lesse pliable to the will of God; but to remaine troubled, grudging, and in a painfull disquietnes. This is no other then a disordinate affection, and spirituall couetousnesse; for we are not so to depend on these sensible feelings; and to seeke after spirituall cōsolations with so great auidity,

dity, as to hinder our peace and quietnes of mind, and make vs lesse conformable with the will of God, if he should please not to bestow them on vs: seing the will of God alone, is better and more worth then all these things together, and it is more expediēt for vs, to content our selues therewith.

And that which I say of these feelings and spirituall consolations, is to be extended likewise to the gift of prayer, and the seruour and facility which we desire therein, as also of the internall peace and quietnes of our mind, together with all other fauours, graces, and spirituall prerogatiues; seing that we may be transported with an affection too disordinate, in the desire of euery one of these, as when we couet them with such impatience and anxiety, as (if we obtaine them not) to become troubled, malecontent, and lesse conformable to the will of God. Also by these feelings and spirituall consolations, we vnderstand here not only deuotion, sensible feelings, and spirituall sweetneses, but also the substance it selfe and gift of prayer, and the facility of applying our selues vnto it, and perseuering at in it, with

that tranquility and repose as we desire, yea it is this of which for the present we principally do treat, indeauouring to declare how we are to conforme our selues vnto the will of God therin, and not to seeke it with to great anxiety and earnestnes; for concerning consolations, feelings & sensible deuotions, there are none who would not endure the want of the, so they might haue the substāce of prayer, and obtaine the fruite therof: for they know that prayer consists not in these feelings, deuotions, and in tendernes of mind, and therefore without any great vertue they may be had, but for one to go to prayer, and remaine there as if he were a stone with so great aridity and drinesse, as if to pray were the least of his businesse for which he came; it seeming to him that God hath wholly withdrawne himselfe from him, barring him from all accesse vnto him, & that that curse is false vpon his head, which God long since did threa-

Leui. 26. ten to his people. *Dabo quoque vobis ca-*  
 19. & *lignum desuper sicut ferrum, & terram a-*  
 Deut. 28. *neam*, here there is need of great vertue  
 26. and fortitude indeed, when euen the hea-  
 uen seemes to them to be made of Iron,  
 and

and the earth of brasse, feing that not a dropp of water raineth downe on them, to soften theie hearts, and produce that fruite which should maintaine their spirituall liues, but they remaine in a perpetuall sterility and drouth: neither is it this aridity which only tormenteth them, but there rusheth vpon them sometimes such variety of thoughts and wild distractions, and they perhaps so filthy & vilanous, as they seeme to haue come vnto prayer vnto no other end, then to be troubled vext and assaulted with all sorts of tentations; If you tell them, there best way is then, to haue their thoughts on death, or on our Sauour crucified, which is an excellent remedy indeed, they answer you, that they haue tryed it, but found no fruite in it: for could they do that? what should they desire for more? Sometimes one shall be so ill disposed and dry in his prayer, that he cannot so much as thinke vpon it, or if with much force & difficulty he hale his thoughts vnto it, it is in such a manner, as he is neuer moued with it, nor rendred any whit the more recollected or attent, but they passe it ouer without leauing any impression

in the soule, and this is that which we call properly spirituall desolation, aridity or drines, and defection of mind; and herein it is necessary that we conforme our selues vnto the will of God.

This is a point of greatest consequence it being on of the commonest complaints, and wherwith they are most contristated, who giue themselves to the exercise of prayer, for they sigh and weep when they find themselves in this manner, whilst on the one side they heare so much said in the praise of prayer, and of the good thereof, and, how according as that passes, so the daies and liues of spirituall men do passe, whilst they likewise vnderstand, that it is one of the principalst meanes as we haue, as well for our owne particular profit, as that of our neighbour; and on the other side see themselves so farre (in their opinion) from making any good prayer: this, this grieueth, this afflicts them much, this makes the think that God hath forsaken the, & thinks no more vpon the, this makes the feare they haue wholly lost his fauour, and are false into his displeasure and disgrace, seing it seemes to them, that he cuts them of from all refuge, all recourse

course vnto him. And this tentation is farther augmented when they see the great progresse which others make in prayer, in a few daies exercise almost without any paine at all; whilst they although they labour more then their force can beare, are nothing profitted. From whence are begotten other tentations, yet worse then these, as to make their complaint sometimes of our Lord himselfe, for dealing with them in such a rigorous manner, and they begin to thinke of leauing of their exercise of prayer, imagining it a thing vnfit for them, seing it succeeds in no better manner with them. And all this is made farre more and worse, by the diuels vexing them with that vnquiet thought, that themselues alone are in the cause of all, & that for their owne fault God deales so harshly with them, and therefore some do liue in great discomfort, comming out of their praier as from some racke or torment, fadde melancholy, and both intollerable to themselues and to all those with whom they do conuerse, Wherefore we will now by the assistance of the grace of God, both answer and satisfy this tentation and complaint.

THE

## THE XXV. CHAPTER.

*An answer vnto the complaint of those  
who are troubled with aridity and  
desolation in prayer.*

**F**IRST I do not say, that we are not to reioyce when we are visited and comforted by God, for it is manifest, that there is none so stupid, but would be glad and delighted with the presence of his beloued; neither do I say, that we are to haue no recentment of his absence from vs, when he punisheth vs with aridity and tentations, for I see it is impossible to do otherwise. Our Sauour Christ had feeling himselfe to be abandoned by his heauenly Father, when hanging on the crosse

Math. 27 he vttered these mournfull words, *Deus*  
46. *meus, Deus meus, vt quid dereliquisti me?*  
my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? but that which is intended and desired is, that we should know how to make our profit of this distresse and experiment, by which God commonly doth try his elect, and with a vigour of mind put our selues vnder the protection  
of



*with the will of God.* Chap. 25. 269  
of the will of God, in saying: *Veruntamen Math. 26*  
*non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu, ô Lord be* 39.  
it not as I will, but as thou wilt, seing es-  
pecially that sanctity and perfection con-  
sists not in consolations, neither in hauing  
of high and excellent manner of prayer,  
and that our profit and perfection is not  
measured therby, but by a perfect loue of  
God, which is not comprised in any of  
these things, but in a conformity and en-  
tire vnion with the diuine will as well in  
bitternes, as in deliciousnes, aswell in ad-  
uersity, as prosperity, and therefore we  
ought with the same equality of mind  
to receaue from the hand of God, aswell  
the crosse and to be spiritually forsaken,  
as any ioy or cōsolation: giuing him thākes  
for the one, and the other alike.

If you will haue me in darknes be you  
blessed, if you will haue me in light be you  
also blessed, if you will comfort me be you  
blessed, if you will afflict me be you like-  
wise blessed. And so *S. Paul* doth coun-  
sell vs: *In omnibus gratias agite, hæc est* Thomas  
*enim voluntas Dei in Christo Iesu in om-* a Kēpis.  
*nibus vobis,* reder thanks for euery thing,  
for such is the will of God in Christ Ie- 1. ad  
sus in all of you. If then this be the will of Thes. 5.  
God 17.

God what can we desire more? my life is giuen me to no other end, then to please God with it, if then he please to direct the whole course of it, by these darke, troublesome, and vneasy waies, why should I seeke & wish for paths more lightsome & pleasant? God would haue such an one, go forwards in that way which he seeth, which he receaues gust in and loues, and leads me through this gloomy wilderness. I will not chaunge my barrennes, for his fertility, neither my frights, for his security, this is the language of those who haue their eyes open to see the truth, and with this they maintaine themselves in comfort. Master *Auila* saith excellent well. If God would but vnuaille our eyes, we should behould more cleerly the day, that all things in earth and heauen, are to little and base, to be desired or possessed by vs, if you but seperat them from the will of God; and that there is nothing, how little or bitter so euer it be, which would not be of great value, being once conioyned with the will of God. It is far better without comparison to liue in afflictions, discomforts, aridities, and tentations, if he shall please to haue it so, then

M *Auila*  
audi filia  
c. 26.

*With the will of God.* Chap. 25. 271  
in all the delights, comforts and contemplations which can possibly be, if you but take from them the will of God.

But some one shall say, if I knew that the will of God were such, and that he were more pleased and delighted with it, I should soone conforme my selfe, and remaine well contented, although it were to passe my whole life ouer so, for I see sufficiently my obligatiō, to desire nothing so much, as the good pleasure of God, and that my life is ordained vnto no other end: but it seemes to me that God would be farre better pleased, could I make my prayers better, and had more attention and internall recollection, and came with better preparation; and moreouer that which not a little troubleth me, is that it is by reason of my fault and negligence, that I cannot entertaine my selfe in prayer; if I knew for certaine, that I had performed my duty, and that it hapned vnto me through no fault of mine, it would not grieue nor trouble me halfe so much. This complaint is well set downe and there can be nothing added more vnto it seing therein is comprised and inuolued, all the objections of those who make the like complaints

plaints. And so if we can but well cleere this difficulty, much of our worke is done, since it is the ground of an ordinary and vniuersall grieve, there being no person, how holy and perfect so euer he be, who hath not his share sometimes, in this aridity and spirituall desolation. We read of S. Francis and S. Katharine of Siena, those great darlings and fauorites of God, that they haue not been exempted from it, and S. Anthony the Abbot although otherwise he was arriued to so transcendent a degree of contemplation, that whole nights seemed to passe away with him as a blast of wind; and when the morning came, he would complaine the sunne did rise too early this man notwithstanding (I say) was sometimes so haunted with the importunity of wicked thoughts, as he would cry out with a loud voice to God, my God I would faine be good, and my

Ber. ser.  
34. super  
cantica.

thoughts will not permit me, and S. Bernard hath the same complaint. *Exaruit cor meum, coagulatum est sicut lac, factum sicut terra sine aqua, nec compungi ad lachrymas queo, tanta est duritia cordis: non sapit psalmus, non legere libet, non orare delectat, meditationes solitas*

non

*non inuenio. Vbi illa inebriatio Spiritus?*  
*ubi mentis serenitas? & pax & gaudium*  
*in Spiritu Sancto?* O Lord my heart is  
dried vp, and coagulated like milke, it is  
become like earth without water, & can-  
not be compunct to teares, the hardnes of  
my heart is so great, I take no pleasure in  
singing, I haue no will to read, I receaue  
no delight in prayer, neither do I find my  
wonted meditations, where is that ineb-  
riation of soule? where that serenity of  
mind? & peace and ioy in the holy Ghost?  
and therfore this doctrine is necessary for  
all, and I do hope by Gods assistance like-  
wise to satisfy euery one.

Let vs begin then from hence. I graunt  
you that your faults are cause of your di-  
straction, and aridity in prayer, and that  
you cannot settle yourself vnto it, & ther-  
fore it is expediēt that you know so much,  
and say, it is for your passed sinnes, and  
present negligences and defects for which  
God Almighty doth punish you, with the  
subtraction of all feruours, & all feeling in  
prayer, leauing you without all recolle-  
ction, attention, and rest, because you are  
not worthy or rather wholly vnworthy  
of it. Notwithstanding it followes not

S

from

Luc. 19.  
21.

from hence , that you should complaine of it, but on the contrary, you ought entirely therein to conforme your selfe vnto the will of God. Shall I demonstrate this vnto you most cleerly? *de ore tuo te iudico?* I will condemne you, by the words of your owne mouth do you not acknowledge and also confesse your selfe , that because of your sinnes past , and present negligences and defects, you deserue to be greeuously chastized by God? I do assuredly , I haue often merited hell and therefore no punishment can be to great for me, but all whatsoeuer besides, will be Gods mercy and my felicity, if it be compared with what I haue deserued , and I should esteeme it for a singular benefit, if God would send me some punishment in this life, because I should receaue it as a pledge and assurance , that he hath pardoned my sinnes, and reserues me not to be punished in the other life , since heere he chastiseth me. This is enough, there is required no more, I am satisfied , and provided that they be not words only spoken in the ayre, let vs come vnto the issue and effect: behould the punishment which God for the present sends you for your sinnes,

sinnes, are these desolations, these distractions, and aridities, this spirituall dereliction, therefore are the heauens become like yron vnto you, and the earth like brasfe, therefore hath God retired and shut vp himselfe from you, so as you can find nothing to entertaine your selfe in prayer, God will for the present chastise you with this, and so remit, and expiat your sinnes: do you not thinke that your passed sinnes, and present imperfections, tepidities and negligences do well deserue this punishment? yes vndoubtedly, and I professe that weighed with my sinnes they are but light, and that they are full of Iustice and mercy; of Iustice, because I hauing so often shut the gate of my heart against almighty God, and giuen no care vnto him when he knockt without with his holy inspirations, but haue sent them cōtēptibly away; wherfore I do iustly merit that he should stop his eares, and affoord me no answere now, whē I call vpo him, & that he should not open, his gate of fauour to me, but shut me out: this is a most iust punishment, but beareth no proportiō to my offences, and therefore is ful of mercy, because I merit infinitely more. Conforme your selfe then

with the will of God, in this your punishment, & receaue it with gratfull thanks, seing he is so mercifull in chastising you, & doth not punish you according to your deserts. Do you not say that you haue merited hell? How are you so audacious then to require of God, his fauours and consolatiōs in prayer? and to haue accessse and familiarity with him by their addresse enioying that peace and tranquillity of mind which he is not accustomed to bestow on any but his children, whom he dearly loueth and tendreth? or how dare you complaine when you find the contrary? do you not perceauē how great this presūption is? how intollerable this pride? hold your selfe content that God vouchsafeth to keepe you in his house, & suffereth you in his presence; and acknowledge and esteeme it for a high fauour, & singular benefit. If we had any humility in our hearts, we should neuer haue complaints in our mouthes in what māner soeuer God did deale with vs, and so this tē-  
tation would easely cease.



THE XXVI. CHAPTER.

*How we may conuert aridity and desolation, into a good and profitable prayer.*

**W**E are not ōly to suppress in our selues this complaint, but to endeavour to make our profit of this aridity and desolation, and conuert it into an excellent prayer, vnto which first those things will confer much helpe of which we haue spoken in our treatise of prayer, Traſt. 5.  
c. 19. to wit, to say, when we find our selues in this manner, ô Lord, in so much as this same is hapned through my fault, I am most sorry, and heartily grieved for the sinne and offence which I commit therin; but in that it is your will, and a paine and punishment which I (through my sinnes) haue iustly merited, I accept it ô Lord, & that with all willingnes, and not only for the present or for a little time, but for all the daies of my life, were they neuer so numerous I freely offer my selfe to beare this crosse, and am ready prest to bow vnder the weight therof, and this with all due acknowledgment and thankfulness; This

patience and humility, this resignation with the will of God, in this affliction, is more acceptable to God, then my many complaints and great anxiety that I cannot entertaine my selfe in prayer, and am so troubled with various thoughts and distractions whilst I am making it; If this be not so, do but resolue me, in your opinion, whither of these two children should please their Father more, he who is content with euery thing his Father bestoweth vpon him, or he who is with nothing satisfied, but goeth alwaies grudging and repining, thinking nothing sufficient which he hath, alwaies crauing more, and better things then are assigned for him? without all doubt you will say the first of them; and it is the like betwixt God Almighty and vs, that patient and quiet natured child of his, who is well content, and conformeth himselfe in euery thing vnto the will of his celestiall Father, which he shall please to send him, although it be neuer so hard and troublesome, although it were only a hard and naked bone, doth more content & please Almighty God, then on who is still repining, and euer complaining and moaning  
with

with himself, that he hath nothing, & that nothing is bestowed vpon him. Moreouer I pray you resolue me, who taketh the better way & more moueth the compassions of men to giue almes, and him to pittie his necessity, that begger who complaineth if they do not satisfy him presently, and draw their purses, at the first request; or he who lyeth expecting at the rich mans gate with silence and patience, without complaining that he waiteth to long, but hauing begged once, and implored his pittie, after he knoweth his mind is vnderstood, waiteth there in the raine and biting cold, without crying out, or vsing importunity, there is no doubt but the rich man by this mans patience and humility, will be moued to giue him a large and liberall almes whilst the other rascals pride and sturdines, shall stir him to nothing but anger and offence; & so it is with God Almighty and vs.

And vnto the end that you may the better perceauce the value and fruite of this kind of prayer, and how gratfull it is to God, I would faine know of you, what better prayer there is and what greater fruite expected from any prayer, then the

obtaineing an inuincible patience in aduersities, and a great conformity with the will of God, with an excellent loue of his diuine Maiestie? Wherefore do we pray at all, but to arriue to these? when God shall send you then, these aridities and tentations in your prayer, do but conforme your selfe in this affliction, and spirituall desolation to his holy will, and you shall exercise an acte of patience and the loue of God, so high and eminent, as a more perfect cannot be imagined. It is said and with good reason, that loue declareth it selfe best, in suffering labour & affliction for it beloueds sake, and that the greater the afflictions are, the more great shall that loue declare it selfe to be; Now the liueliest torments, and the heauiest crosse and mortification which God Almightyes seruants can haue laid vpon them and which goe nearest the heart of any spirituall man, are these desolations, in regard of which all corporall afflictions, in point of riches, health, and temporall goods, are not in way of comparison to be accounted of. And therefore euery one is entirely to conforme himselfe vnto the will of God, in this barrenness of comfort,

fort, in imitation of our Sauour Christ  
spiritually abandoned hanging vpon the  
crosse; accepting of this spirituall mortifi-  
cation for terme of his whole life, if God  
shall please for to dispose it so, with a pure  
intention, only to content Almighty God  
therewith. This is an acte of great patience  
and loue of God, and a most high and  
profitable prayer; yea and such an one, as  
there doe not want those who esteem  
them for glorious Martyrs, who are ex-  
ercised therein.

Lud. Blo  
in spec.  
spir c. 6.

Moreouer I demaund of you, where-  
fore you apply your selfe to prayer, vnles  
by meanes of it, to obtaine humility and  
the knowledge of your selfe, how often  
haue you desired of God, to giue you a  
perfect knowledge of what you are, and  
now behold God hath heard your peti-  
tion, and by this meanes doth giue you to  
vnderstand it. Some are of opinion that  
they haue well discharged their duty in  
this point of seeking into the knowledge  
of themselues when they are stricken with  
liuely sorrow for their sinnes, and spend  
many teares in defacing the out of their  
soules; but they deceaue themselues, for it  
is the knowledge of God & not of them-  
selues.

selues, which then they do acquire: but to remaine dry, cold, and hard as any stone, this you haue of your selfe, and if God do not stricke this stone, neither hony nor water will issue out of it, and this is that knowledge of your selfe, from whence floweth forth a thousand benedictions vnto you, & of this you haue abundance, when your prayer in this manner succeeds with you and if you make your: profit of it so, your prayer will be of wonderous fruite vnto you.

## THE XXVII. CHAPTER.

*Of diuers other reasons which may comfort vs, and bring vs to conformity with the will of God, in aridity and desolation of prayer.*

**A**Lthough it is very profitable and good, to thinke for our greater confusion and humility that this affliction, is procured by our owne offences, neuertheles it is also necessary for vs to know that this chastisement, is not alwaies afflicted vpon vs for our faults, but sometimes so disposed of, out of the most profound proui-

providence of our Lord, who distributeth his gifts according as he pleaseth best, and as it is no waies conuenient that a whole body be composed, only of eyes, of feet, of hands, or heads, but that there should be different members in his Church; so is it as much vntitting, that this particular and excellent manner of prayer, which we haue mentioned in a treatise therof apart, should be communicated to euery on, and it is as little necessary, seing they merit it not, or suppoling that they do, yet may they merit more in other things, in the graunting of which vnto them, God may oblige them with a greater fauour, then in bestowing vpon them this prerogatiue. There hath been diuers great and holy Saints, vnto whom we do not know whither our Lord hath in this kind been so fauourable; or if this grace were added to the aboundance of the rest, they haue said with *S. Paul* that they tooke no glory in it, nor had it in any singular esteeme, but all their glory was to beare the crosse of Christ: *Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Iesu Christi.*

Treat. 5:  
C. 4. & 5.

Ad Galat.  
6. 14.

*M. Auila* treating of this hath a saying to 2. epist.

ing of great consolation, God (saith he) leaueth some in desolation for many yeares, and oftentimes for their whole liues, and for my part I beleue that the lot and portion of these persons is best of all, if they haue but so much faith, as not to censure euill of it, and withall patience & courage to suffer so straunge an accident and long a banishment. If one could but perswade himselfe that this condition is the best for him, he would easily cōforme his owne will to that which God desires.

**Tract. 5.**  
**c. 20.**

The holy Saints, and Masters of spirituall life, do bring many reasons to the declaring and prouing that this part or portion is the better for them. Amōg the rest we will content our selues with one of the most important of them, confirmed by the authorities of *S. Augustin*, *S. Hierom*, and *S. Gregory*, as also of most of those who haue handled this argument, which is that all haue not sufficiēt ability to conserue themselves in their humility, in such a height of contemplation, seing we can scarcely wring out a teare or two, but we presently perswade our selues we are become spirituall men and high contemplatiues; whence we proceed to compare & per-



perhaps prefer our selues to other men.

And euen the Apostle S. Paul himselfe did seeme to stand in need, of some such counterpoise, least otherwise he should haue been swaied to vanity: *Et ne magnitudo reuelationū extollat me, datus est mihi stimulus carnis, angelus satana qui me colaphizet*, to the end that his being rapt to the third heauen, and the high intelligences which he had there receaued, might not stire him vp to pride, God permitted him to be still haunted with a temptation which might be sufficient to humble him, and make him know his owne infirmity. Therefore although this way do seeme more eminent and high, yet the other is more secure, and so God who is most wise, and who conducts vs vnto one end, which is himselfe, doth lead each one that way which is most conueniēt for him. Perhaps if you enioyed that great familiarity with Almighty God, in prayer, in place of becoming humble and making your profit of it, you would become more proud and arrogant, whereas now you are conserued in humility and confusion, and therefore this way is most proper for you, & most secure, howeuer

Aug. lib. de orādo Deū que est epist. 121. Hier. su. illud. Thre. 30 sed & cū clama- uero & rogaue- ro exclu- sit ora- tionem | meam. Greg. li. 10. mor. c. 21. & 24. 2. Cor. 12. 7.

Math. 20 euer you may be ignorant of it. *Nescitis*  
 22. *quid petatis*, you know not what you  
 aske.

Greg. li. S. Gregory to this purpose doth teach  
 9. mor. vs an excellent doctrine on this verse of  
 c. 7. Iob: *Si venerit ad me, non videbo eum;*

Iob. 9. 11 *si abierit, non intelligam*, if he come vnto  
 me, I will not see him, and if he depart  
 from me, I will take no notice of it. Man,  
 saith he is become so blind through sinne,  
 that he doth not know, when he draweth  
 nigh to God, or when he departeth from  
 him, yea oftentimes that which he concea-  
 ceaus to be a great fauour of God, and  
 wherby he imagineth himself to approach  
 nigh vnto him, is that wherby he incur-  
 reth the offence of God, and is the occa-  
 sion of his farther separation from him,  
 and on the contrary, that which he esteemeth  
 to be the anger of God, and wherby he  
 gesses that God forsaketh him, and casts  
 him vtterly into forgetfulness, is Gods  
 grace vnto him, and the only thing which  
 doth withhold him from departing from  
 him. And so, who is there that doth not  
 thinke, when he finds himselfe plunged,  
 in high prayer and contemplation, and on  
 the receauing hand, of  
 many

many graces and fauours from Almighty God, that he is well aduanced on the way of a straiter vnion with his diuine Maieſtie, & ſo oftentimes he cometh to waxe proud of theſe priuacies and graces, and too ſecure, and to confide in himſelfe too much; and the diuell by that way doth bring him to ouerthrow and ruine, which he imagined to lead directly to a greater eminence, and to approch nigher to Almighty God. On the other ſide oftentimes one ſhall find himſelfe afflicted and deſolate, aſſaulted with grieuous and fierce tentatiōs, vexed with diſhoneſt thoughts, with horrid blaſphemies and doubts of faith, and thinke that God is mightily offended with him, and that he vtterly forſaketh and leaueth him, and then he is higher vnto him, then euer he was before, ſeing by this meanes, he is rendred more humble, and more intelligent of his owne infirmity, and ſo wholly diffiding in himſelfe, he hath recourſe to God with more liuely vigour and reſolution, in placing all his confidence in him, and making it all his care that he depart not from him. So as that is not the beſt, which ſeemeth ſo to you, but it is conuenient you know, that

that the way which God doth lead you, is the best and most expedient for you.

Moreouer, this very bitternes, this griefe and trouble which you resent so much, because you make not your prayers (in your owne iudgment) so well as you ought to do, may be a new cause of consolation to you, seing it is a particular grace and fauour of God, and an infalible signe of your loue to him; for there is no griefe, where there is no loue: we cannot be sorrowfull that we serue not God enough without some will and purpose to serue him well; and therefore this pain& griefe is begotten from the loue of God and the desire of better seruing him, if you had no care how well or ill you serued him, how your prayers did go, and how your works were done, it were an euill signe, but to be sorry and afflicted because it seemeth to you, you do nothing as you ought, hath a good signification; but this feeling will be attwadged, and sorrow made sweet vnto vs, when on the one side considering them to be pain& affliction, on the other we do consider them the will of God: conforme your selfe then vnto it, and render thanks to  
his

his high Maiestie, that he hath left you, so eager an appetit to do your best to please him, how euer you conceaue the worst as may be of your actions, negligence and languor in performing them.

Moreouer, although you should do nothing els in prayer, but only make your personall appearance there, before that diuine and soueraigne Maiestie yet were it not a little seruice which you should do to God, like as we see that it giueth a glorious lusture, to the greatnes and Maiestie of an earthly Monarche, that the Princes and Nobles giue euery day attendance at his court, and are personally present there at all assaies. *Beatus homo qui audivit me, & qui vigilat ad fores meas* Prou. 8.  
*quotidie, & obseruat ad postes ostij mei.* It<sup>34.</sup>

befits the glory of the diuine Maiestie in regard of our sleight condition, and the greatnes of the affaire wherof we treat, that we should be stil waiting at the dores of his celestiaall pallace, ready with thanks when he shall giue vs entry, and humbling our selues, when he shall shut vs out, acknowledging our selues no waies to merit it, and in this manner our prayer will be alwaies good and profitable; With

T

these

these helps and other the like we are to  
serue our selues, in conforming vs vnto  
the will of God in this desolation, and  
spiritual defection, receauing it with grat-  
full thanks and saying: *Salue amaritudo*  
*amarissima omnis plena gratia*: haile most  
bitter bitternes, full of all grace & good.

F Barth.  
de Matt.  
Archiep.  
Bracha-  
rensis in  
suo cō-  
pē, c. 26.

## THE XXVIII. CHAPTER.

*That it is a great deceite and grienous  
tentation, to leaue of our prayer, be-  
cause we find our selues in the said  
manner in it.*

**I**T followeth from that which we haue  
said, that it is a great deceit and grie-  
uous tentation, for one when he feeleth  
himselſe ſo dry, and deſolate in prayer, to  
giue it ouer, or not to perſeuere in it, as  
thinking that he getteth no profit by it,  
but only for his paines hath loſſe of time.  
This is a tentation, wherwith the maligne  
ſpirit, hath made not only diuers ſeculars,  
but alſo many Religious, leaue of the ex-  
erciſe of prayer, or (failing of ſo much) at  
leaſt to go more rarely to it, and not to  
employ in it, ſo much time as otherwiſe  
they

*With the Will of God.* Chap. 28. 291  
they could conueniently. Diuers begin to  
apply themſelues to prayer, and as long  
as they find ſenſible comfort and deu-  
otion in it, do preſecute it with great care  
and feruour, but when they chaunce to  
fall into diſtraction and aridity they pre-  
ſently imagine, that it is no prayer which  
they make, but rather a new ſinne, to be  
there in the preſence of God with ſo much  
diſtraction, and ſo little reuerence. And  
ſo by little and little they come to neglect  
their praier, in preſuming that they ſhould  
do God better ſeruice, in employing the-  
ſelues in ſome other exerciſe and occupa-  
tion, then in ſuch manner to remaine in  
prayer. And as ſoone as the diuell hath  
any inkling of this their faint heartednes,  
he preſently taketh hold of the occaſion,  
and is ſo diligent, to helpe them with  
theſe diſtractions in their prayer, and to  
ſee they haue no want of tentations to ſe-  
cond them: he caſts into their thoughts,  
that all the time they ſpend in prayer is  
as good as loſt, and ſo by degrees bring-  
eth them to leaue it of, with loſſe of  
their vertue, and oftentimes with yet  
a worſe effect. This we know hath been  
the begining of the ruines of many; *Eſt*

*amicus socius mensa, & non permanebis in die necessitatis*, saith the wiseman, to be delighted with God, there is none but hath desire, but to indure and suffer for him, is an infalible signe of a true loue to him, when you find comfort and deuotiō in prayer, it is no wonder if you perseuere in it, & entertaine your selfe with it for diuers howers, for you may be moued to it, only by the gust and contentment which you find in it, as it is a signe you are, when you continue it no longer then whilst you haue such a baite as this to intice you on. When God doth visit one, with desolation distraction & aridity, then cometh the tryall of true frends indeed, and those faithfull seruants of his then manifest themselues, and shew that they seeke, no interest of their owne, but purely the good will and pleasure of Almighty God; and therefore particularly in such occasions we are to perseuer with all patience and humility, the wholl time

B Ignat. allotted for our prayer, and rather longer;  
Irb. exer. as our B. Father counselleth vs, the better  
spirit. to ouercome the tentation, and shew our  
ānot. 13. force and valour against the enemy.

Palad. in *Palladius* recounteth of himselfe, how  
that





that ōce being shut into his cell, to bestow himselfe with more quietnes on the consideration of celestiaall things, he was grievously assaulted with the tentation of aridity, and wondrously disquieted in his thoughts, in so much as he begā to thinke of leauing of his exercise begun, as a thing for which he was wholly then vnfit, herupon he had recourse to *S. Macharius of Alexandria*, and declaring to him his whole tentation, he desired of him counsell and remedy. The Saint answered him, whē those thoughts are suggested to you againe, that you should be gone, & actuat your selfe in those pious considerations no more; *Dic ipsis cogitationibus tuis. propter Christum parietes cellæ istius custodio*, say to those thoughts of yours, for Christs sake I keepe the walles of this cell of mine, as much as to say vnto him, that he should perseuer, & content himselfe to performe that holy action purely for the loue of Christ, although for his owne part, this were all the fruite which he should reape from it; and this is an excellent answer, to put of such tentations as these, for as much as the principall end, which we are to pretend in his holy exercise, and the

hist. Lau.  
siaca.

intention with which we ought to apply our selues vnto it, and to be exercised in it, is not to haue our owne particular tast & cōfort in it, but to performe a good and holy action, which may be pleasing and gratefull vnto God, & withall to satisfy & defray, according to our small ability, the interest, of that great and principall debt, which we owe him for his being what he is, and for those innumerable benefits which we haue receaued from his omnipotent hand. And in fine seeing that he wil- leth and pleaseth that I should be for the present so employed, although it seem to me that I do nothing at all, yet I ought to be most content therewith. We read of *S. Katharin of Sienna*, that she was for the space of many daies, destitute of all spirituall consolation, and had no feeling left of the seruour of her wonted deuotion, being moreouer vexed with most wicked and filthy thoughts, from which by no meanes shee could deliuer herselfe, and yet notwithstanding shee neuer omitted her prayer, but perseuered in it, as well as shee could, and with as much circumspection and care as was possible, speaking vnto her selfe in this manner. O thou most vile

Blos.c.4.  
monil.  
spirit.

vile and wretched sinner, thou dost deserue no consolation; for what? ought it not to suffice thee although thou wert to suffer these afflictions & spirituall nights, thy whole life long if finally thou mightest not be damned as thou deseruest: assuredly thou madest choice to serue God, on no such condition as to receaue consolations from him here, but that thou might enioy him in heauen for all eternity. Arise therefore, and prosecute thy wonted exercises, and continue faithfull to so good a Lord.

Let vs then imitate these examples, & conforme our comfort vnto this saying of that holy man. O my Lord I esteeme this my consolation, to be well content to want all humane comfort, and if comfort from thee do fraile me, thy will and righteous probation of me, shall serue me for the best of all contentments. If we be but once arriued to this height of perfection to esteeme the good will and pleasure of God, to be all our ioy and delight, so as euen to take pleasure to be depriued of all comfort, in considering it to be his blessed will and pleasure, then we shall be in possession of true content in-

Tho. de  
Kempis.

T 4                deed,

## THE XXIX. CHAPTER.

*Wherin that which hath been said is confirmed by some examples.*

**B. Fracis.** **I**T is recounted in the Chronicles of  
**de Ca-** the Order of *S. Dominicke*, how on  
**stillo. 1.** of the Principall Religious of that Order,  
**p. lib. 1.** liued many yeares in that holy Order a  
**c. 6. hist.** singular patterne of exemplar life, and of  
**Ord. Pre.** an excellent purity of mind, without euer  
 enioying any consolation, or finding any  
 tast or delight, in the performance of his  
 Religious exercises, neither in medita-  
 ting, prayer, or spirituall reading. This Re-  
 ligious man, hearing on the other side fre-  
 quent mention made, of those great fa-  
 uours high graces and spirituall feelings  
 which God did vsually communicate to  
 others, became halfe desperate, and one  
 night in a deepe discontent he burst out  
 in his prayer before a Crucifix into these  
 much vnaduised words which were ac-  
 companied with many a bitter teare. O  
 Lord, I heare it commonly reported of  
 you,

you, that in goodnes and sweetnes you  
surpasse all your creatures: behold me here  
who haue serued you many yeares, and  
suffered for your sake, much tribulation,  
hauing made a willing sacrifice of my  
selfe, to your only seruice ; had I serued  
any Tyrāt but a quarter of this time. with-  
out doubt he would haue long since some  
waies declared, himselfe well pleased with  
me, either by a good word had I desired  
so much, or a gratefull looke, or some  
pleasant smile or other, but you o God,  
you haue not done me the least good, or  
fauour, or shewed me any of those graces  
which you do to others, but you, you who  
are sweetnes it selfe, haue handled me  
more cruelly then a hundred tyrants, oh  
God what is the meaning of this? mise-  
rable as I am, why do you ordeine it so?  
he had no sooner vttered these fearfull  
words, but he heard so mighty and horri-  
ble a cracke, as if the whole Church had  
been shattering downe, and on the rouse  
was such a hideous noise, as if a thousand  
rauenous hounds had been tearing vp the  
planchers with their teeth, wherupon  
being astonished & all trembling through  
feare, he cast vp his head for to serch out  
the

the cause ; he perceaued ouer his shouldiers standing the most horrible and vglie sight as euer man had seen, a diuell weldeing a huge barre of yro, with which he gaue him so mighty a blow vpon the body as he strokc him flat to ground, without being able to lift vp himselfe againe ; neuertheles he inforced himselfe so much as to crawle to the protection of an Altar not farre from him, where he found himselfe so pittifully bruized , that he could not stire a limbe, all his body remaining as if it had been broken and disioynted with the force of blowes; In the morning when the Religious came into the Church to Prime, they found him all streched at length, lying vpon the ground without any motion , as if he had been dead, and without being able to gesse the cause of such a sodaine and dolefull accident they caried him into the infirmary, where he remained for three weeks together iu most miserable torment , breathing from him a stench so filthy & horrible , that the Religious could not approach vnto him, to bring him any remedy or reliefe, without first stopping their noses, and preparing themselves before  
with

with certaine preferuatues at the end of this time he began a little to recouer strength, and as soone as he perceaued himselfe able to go vpon his legges, he (to cure his foolish presumption & pride, and seeke remedy at that place where through his fault he had receaued his wound) went into the Church, and with a profound humility seasoned in many teares, he made a prayer far different from the former, confessing his fault, and acknowledging himselfe vnworthy of any spirituall fauour, but on the contrary, meriting the greatest punishments. Whereupon our Lord did comfort him with a voice from heauen, saying vnto him, if thou desirest to enioy spirituall gust and consolation; thou must be humble, and acknowledge thine owne basenes and vility, knowing thy selfe to be more contemptible then durt, and of lesse value then the very wormes, which thou dost crush to earth vnder thy feet: & herewith he toke so faire a warning that therupon he became a perfect Religious man.

We read an other example far different from this of our *B. F. S. Ignatius*,  
who (as it is recorded in his life) reflecting  
vpon

Lib. 3. c.  
1. vitæ S.  
P. Ignat.

vpon his faults, and deeply sorrowing for them, was wont to say, that he desired in punishment of them that our Lord would sometimes deprive him of the deliciousnesse of his consolations, vnto the end that feeling the curbe therof; he might be put in mind; to carry himselfe with more care and circumspection, in God Almightyes seruice. But the mercy of our good God was so great towards him, and the multitude of his sweetnes, and suauity of his grace so aboundantly great that the oftener he fell, and the more earnestly he desired to feele the punishment in some such rigourous manner, the more gracious our Lord did shew himself vnto him, and in the greater aboundance did he shower downe vpon him the treasures of his infinit liberality. And so he vsed to say, that he did verely belecue, there was not a man in the world, in whom was to be found, two things so passing opposit as was in him, first to fall so often into imperfections, and continue so ingratfull to Almighty God; and on the other side to receaue so great and continuall fauours from his Almighty hand.

Blos. c.

*Blosius* writeth of a certaine great seruant



uant of God Almighty, vpon whom our  
blessed Lord had bestowed many graces  
& fauours, giuing him great illustrations,  
and communicating to him in praier high  
& admirable things, this holy soule out of  
his profound humility, did begge of God,  
if so it might stand with his better will and  
pleasure, to take from him that his abou-  
dant grace, and our Lord at his petition,  
for fīue yeares together left him without  
all consolation, in greuous tentations, in  
great anxieties and afflictions, and when  
once, whilst he bitterly wept, two An-  
gells presented themselues to cōfort him,  
he told them, that he requested no conso-  
lation of them, but he should be aboun-  
dantly satisfied, if the most acceptable  
will of God might be effected in him.

10. mon.  
spirit.

The same *Blosius* relateth how our Sa- Ibid. c. 4.  
uiour once said vnto *S. Brigit* why my  
deare daughter are thou so troubled and  
solicitous; vnto whom shee answered, be-  
cause I am afflicted with diuers vaine and  
euill cogitations, of which I can by no  
meanes rid my selfe, and the feare of thy  
Iudgment doth much disturbe my soule:  
this is exact iustice answered our blessed  
Lord, that as thou hast been formerly de-  
lighted

lighted on the vanities of the world against my will, so now against thy will thou shouldest be troubled with as many various and wicked thoughts therof; Neuerthelesseare my iudgment with moderation and discretion, firmly euer confiding in me who am thy God, for thou art to hold it for most certaine true; that such euill cogitations, which the mind striueth against and doth abhorre, both purify and crowne the afflicted soule: if thou canst not auoid them, beare them patiently and keepe thy will, resolutely bent against them. And although thou dost not consent vnto them, notwithstanding feare least thou become proud therof, and so come to fall, for whosoever stands, is supported with the only force of God.

Tauler.

*Taulerus* saith and *Blosius* recoūteth it in his *Cōsolation of the Pusilanimous* that there are diuers who whē they are vexed with any tribulation do vse to say vnto me, Father I am much afflicted, all goeth very ill with me, for I am greatly pestered and perturbed with many afflictions and much grieve and sorrow; and I tell them that it goeth well with them: then they will reply, ô Sir but my fault is only the  
cause

cause of it, to whō I answered againe whether your fault be cause of it, or no, beleeue neuertheles that it is a crosse of affliction imposed by God vpon you & rendering thanks vnto him, suffer it patiently, and resigne your selfe vnto him. Then will they tell me, oh but I euen internally pine away, with that great aridity, and spirituall obscurity in which I liue; vnto whom I finally reply, beare it patiently my deare child, and it will be more for your soules good, then if you were in neuer so much and great sensible feeling of deuotion.

We read of a great seruant of God Almighty who said, it is forty yeares since first I serued our Lord, and haue been conuersant in prayer, and yet I haue neuer knowne what sensible feeling or consolation was, but only this I haue found; that daie when I haue duely made my prayer, I am much strenghtned, & enabled to go thorough with the exercises of vertue, whereas if I euer omit it or performe it tepidly, I am so infeeble, that I cannot raise my selfe on wing to do any thing which is good and vertuous.

THE

## THE XXX. CHAPTER.

*Of the conformity which we are to haue  
with the will of God, for as much as  
concerneth the distribution of others,  
vertues, and supernaturall gifts.*

**L**Ike as we conforme our selues vnto the will of God, in what manner so euer he shall dispose of vs in prayer, so also are we to do, in all other vertues & gifts of God, and in all spirituall fauours and prerogatiues, it is good to haue all vertues in desire, to aspire vnto them, and indeauour to attaine them; but we are in such manner to desire to become better, and to go forwards and increase in vertue, as not to be disquieted if we obtaine not that which we desire, and to conforme our selues vnto the will of God, and place our whole contentment and delight therein. If God be not pleased to bestow vpon you an Angelicall purity, but would haue you suffer in that kind violent tentations, it is farre better for you to haue patience in it, and to accommodate your selfe vnto the will of God, in this tentation and extremity,

mity, then to disquiet and trouble your selfe, with bootlesly lamenting of your case that you cannot attaine vnto that purity and candour of the blessed soules, in heauen, if God be not pleased to bestow vpon you so profound a humility as *S. Francis* had, neither a mildnes, answerable to that of *Moyse*s or of *Dauid*, nor in fine so great a patience as that of holy *Iob*, but letteth you experience the contrary motions & appetits, your best course were to humble your selfe and to embrace the shame, which may giue you occasion of hauing your selfe in a more vile esteeme; which will not be effected if you remaine troubled with it, and spend your selfe in silly complaints and lamentations, because God hath not indowed you, with an equall patience vnto holy *Iob*, or such a humility as *S. Francis* had. We must conforme our selues vnto the will of God euen in such things as these, or els we shall neuer enioy true quietnes.

*M. Auila* saith excellent well: I do not belieue (saith he) that there hath euer been Saint in the world, who desired not to become better then he was, but that notwithstanding did not hinder quiet of

*Auila c.*  
*23. Audi*  
*filia.*

mind since they desired it, not out of any cupidity of their owne (for that is insatiable & neuer cryeth enough) but only for God, with whose distribution they should haue been content, although he had giuen them lesse then they had, esteeming it the part of on who loueth loially and truly indeed, to content himselfe with that which is giuen him, rather then to desire more, how euer selfe loue may pretend that it is to be able to serue Almighty God the better.

But some will say, that our speech seemeth to tend to this, that we should not be very forwards and feruent in desiring to be more perfect and vertuous then we are, but that we ought to remit our selues wholly vnto God as well in matter of soule, as of our body, and from thence they may imagine that we may giue occasion to some, of becoming more tepide and negligent, and neuer to strue to become perfect, or make progresse in vertue. This point is well to be heeded, seing it is not of little importance; this obiection and reply, is so forcible that there is nothing more in this treatise to be feared. There is no doctrine, how sound or good

so euer it be, which may not be abused by those who know not how to apply it as they ought, & of this number are as well those things which appertaine to prayer, as those which concerne all other vertues, and spirituall gifts, and therefore it is needfull that this be well declared and vnderstood. I do not say that we are not to desire euery day to be better & holier then other, and to be alwaies imitating those who are more perfect, with the greatest diligence and seruour as we can, for we are come into Religion, only vnto this end, and if we do not this we are no good Religious men: but that which I say is, that we are to carry our selues in this point, as we do in exteriour things, where a man must be diligent to procure them, but not anxious, nor too couetous, as the holy Doctors say, and our Sauour prohibiteth it in the Euangell; *Dico vobis ne solliciti sitis anima vestra, quid manducetis, nec Math. 6. corpori vestro quod induamini*, where<sup>25.</sup> that which he reprehends is a care and anxiety too inordinate, and an appetit of those things too immoderate: but he forbiddeth not a moderat care, and requirit diligence, but rather comaunds it, and hath

Gen. 3.  
19.

by way of pennance imposed it on vs: *In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane tuo*. It is requisit that men should vse labour & diligence to liue, or els it were a tempting of Almighty God. In this manner we are to behaue our selues in spirituall things, and in the obtaining of vertues and the gifts of God, wherein we haue need to be very diligent and vigilant, yet so, as not to be-reauē our selues of our minds peace, and conformity with the will of God; You are to do all which possbly you can, and if with all you do, you cannot arriue vnto that high perfectiō to which you do pte-tend, you are not to be transported with impatience, for that were worse then the faults which hinder you, yea although it should seeme to you, that it were occasioned through your owne lukewarmnes (which is a thing that vsually afflicteth many) you are to procure to vse all diligence you can to the compassing of it, when if you find your selfe defectiue, and falne into any faults you are not to be dismayed, or to loose courage, for it is a common case with vs all, you are a man and not an Angell. Infirme and not yet sanctified; Neither is God ignorant of our misery



misery and infirmity, *quoniam ipse cog-* Psal. 102.  
*novit sumentum nostrum*, and would not 14.  
 haue vs discouraged therfore, but that we  
 should repent and humble our selues, and 2. p. 122.  
 presently rise againe & beg new forces of 6. c. 3.  
 him, indeauouring both in the interiour  
 and exterior, to liue more contentedly;  
 for it is farre better that you should pre-  
 sently with cheerfulness enterprise a new,  
 which would redouble your courage to  
 serue God better for the time to come,  
 then in tormenting your selfe for your  
 offences, which whilst you thinke to do  
 for the loue of God, you displease the  
 same God in your ill seruing him, with a  
 tepid heart, and a dejected mind and o-  
 ther the like branches of imperfection,  
 which vse to sprout from such a corrup-  
 ted root. There is nothing els to be feared  
 here then the daunger wherof we haue  
 formerly spoken, which is least our te-  
 pidity do increase, and we omit of our parts  
 to do what lieth in vs vnder the pretext  
 of saying it is God who is to bestow this  
 on me, all is to proceed from his hand, for  
 my part I can do nothing more: and we  
 are likewise to take the same heed in  
 that which we haue said in matter of

c. 26. &  
seq.

prayer, & least slouth also deceaue vs there vnder the same pretense. Hauing then stopt and made good this breach, and done truly on our parts that which we ought to do, God will be more pleased with our patience and humility in these weakneses of ours, and spirituall wants, then with the melancholly and excessiue discontent of those, who thinke their progresse in vertue and perfection no waies answerable to their desire, & their prayer not to succeed so well, as otherwise it might if they were not in fault. For this arte of prayer, and perfecting our selues, is not required, by being sad or lesse satisfied with our selues, or by violence or force of armes, but it is God who doth instruct vs in it, and doth bestow it vpon whom he pleases, and also when he pleases; and it is most certaine that euen among those who are to be blessed in heauen, there is inequality of glory, and therefore we are not to be discouraged if we are not of the best, yea perhaps not of the middle sort, but we are in euery thing to conforme our selues vnto the will of God, and render infinit thanks vnto our gracious Lord that he hath giuen vs  
hope

hope by his great mercy to be saued at last, and if so be that we cannot hold our selues from falling into faults in this mortall life of ours; let vs thanke God at least for this, that he hath giuen vs the knowledge of those faults of ours. And if we cannot obtaine heauen; by the sublimity of our vertues as some others do, let vs be content, to make our selues a way thither, by the knowledge and sorrow of our sinnes, as do the greater part. *S. Hier.* *Hier. in prolog galeat.* *rom* saith that others offer in the Temple of God according to their ability, one gold, an other siluer, and pretious stones, others silke, purple, scarlat and cloth of gold, for me it suffices to make my offering in his holy Temple with goats haire and the skines of beasts: and so, let others present their vertues to God, their excellent and heroicke actions, their high and eleuated contemplations; it is enough for me to sute my offering to my base condition, and to acknowledge and confesse my selfe before the face of God a sinner & imperfect, & present my selfe before his omnipotent Maiestie as a poore & needy wretch. And euen in this I am to reioyce, and to thanke and praise Almighty God

that he hath not deprived vs of those gifts whatsoeuer they be which he hath bestowed vpon vs considering our offences and vile ingratitude.

*S. Bonauenture, Gerson & diuer others*  
do add vnto this another point, by which  
that which we haue said is better confir-  
med, which is, that diuers persons do serue  
God better without this great vertue and  
recollection, (so that on their parts their  
desire and industry be not wanting) then  
if it were graunted them, seing that by  
this meanes they are preserved in humi-  
lity, and they proceed with care and dili-  
gence, procuring with all earnestnes their  
farther progresse in spirit, hauing for that  
end frequent recourse to God: whereas  
if they should once become familiar with  
vertue perhaps they would be proud and  
negligent and goe slowly forwards in the  
service of God, imagining that they had  
already attained that heighth of perfection  
which was necessary for them, & would  
neuer put theselues to the paines of endea-  
uouring to become more perfect thē they  
were. All this which we haue said ought  
to be an incitement vnto vs to do on our  
parts precisely all we can, and to proceed  
alwaies

Bonsu-  
opusc de  
profectu  
Relig li.  
1. c. 33.  
Gert, tra-  
de mōte  
contēpl  
F. Barth.  
de marr.  
Archiep  
Brachar.  
in suo  
cōpend  
p. 2. c. 15.

alwaies with all care and diligence to the purchasing of vertue and perfection, and then to hould our selues content with what focuer our Lord shall please to bestow vpon vs, and not to be deiected nor disquieted for that, vnto which we cannot attaine and which is aboue our reach, for this (as *M. Auila* very well obserueth) *Auila to.* were no other then to afflict our selues *2 epist.* because we haue not wings to fly in the *fol. 32.* ayre.

## THE XXXI. CHAPTER.

*Of the conformity which we are to haue with the will of God, in that which concerneth felicity and glory.*

**W**E are not to conforme our selues oly vnto the will of God, in those things which concerne grace, but also in point of heauenly glory, in which a true seruant of Almighty God ought to be so farre estranged from all interest of his owne, as he is no farther to reioyce in it then that he seeth the holy will of God accomplished, and not for any commodity of his owne. It is a high perfection  
(saith

(saith deuout *Thomas a Kempis*) not to seeke our owne ends neither in little nor much, neither in things temporall nor eternall, and giueth the reason of it, in these words because your will ô Lord and the loue of your honour ought to be transcendent vnto all, and it becomes vs to be more content and comforted therewith, then with all the benefits which either we haue or may possibly receaue.

**Tract. 3.**

**c. 14.**

This is the content and ioy of the Blessed in heauen, where the Saints esteeme their happines greater in the accomplishment of the will of God, then in the excessiuenesse of their owne glory, they being so straiçtly vnited to his will, that they desire not so much the glory which they possesse, neither the beatitude which they enioy, for any profit resulting to the from thence, neither for the content which they receaue therein, but only because God is well pleased therewith, and it is his will for to bestow it on them. And hence it proceedeth that euery one is soe well content with that degree of beatitude which he hath, as he affecteth no other, neither is displeased that any one is aduanced aboue himselfe; because who-

foeuer

soeuer enioyeth the vision of Almighty God, becomes so transformed into him, that he wholly leaueth of all proper will, and beginneth expressely to haue the same will with God, & he taketh all his cōtēment and delight therein, in considering that it is the will & pleasure of God that it should be so. And we see how illustrious this vertue hath been in diuers great Saints, as in *Moyse* and *S. Paul* who for the saluation of soules, and the greater glory of God, seemed so wholly to haue forgot themselues, as they were not so much as mindfull of their owne glory.

Exod. 32

*Aut demitte eis hanc noxam, aut si non facis, dele me de libro tuo quem scripsisti*, either ô Lord forgive these people (said *Moyse*) this fault of theirs, or if thou wilt not blott my name out of thy booke of life, and *S. Paul*, *obtabam ego ipse anathema esse à Christo pro fratribus meis*, I my selfe wished to be excommunicated from *Christ* for my brothers sakes. And *S. Martin* who together with many other Saints, did follow the doctrine of so excellent Masters, said in the article of dying: *Si adhuc sum necessarius populo tuo, non recuso laborem*. O my

32.]

Ad Rō.

9. 3.

God

God if yet it be needfull for thy people that I liue, I do not refuse the labour. They neglected willingly their owne repose, and vnfainedly renounced all right which they had to glory, when they were euen vpon the point of enioying it, offering themselues afresh to more paine and labour for Gods greater seruice. This is truly to do the will of God in earth, as it is in heauen, to cast wholly into forgetfulness our owne commodity, and repose all our content in the accomplishing of the will of God, esteeming the contentment of his diuine Maiestie more, then all our owne profit or the possession both of heauen and earth.

And from hence may be clearly perceaued how great perfection is requirit to the exercise of our conformity to the will of God: for if we must haue no regard of any interest of our owne, of any spirituall good, no not eternall, nor what is more, of blessednes its selfe, to keepe our sight more obseruant of Gods good will and pleasure, how much lesse are we to care for humane, respects and all these temporall things? Whence also we may perceauce how far short they come of this  
per-



perfection who find repugnance to conform themselves vnto the will of God, in such things as we haue treated of in the beginning, as in residing here or there, in living in this Colledge or in that, in being employed in one or the other office, in enioying perfect health or being infirme, in being much or little esteemed by others, for as we now affirme, we are more to esteeme the good pleasure and will of God then all the prerogatiues which we may redound vnto vs, either from our spirituall or eternall good, whereas you are still insisting on these things which in comparison of the other are but drosse and basenes it selfe, he who had but such an ardent desire to please God, and to accomplish his holy will, as to disdain willingly his owne glory, & to be contented with the meanest place, not out of any little desire, of doing heroicall acts to commend his seruices and labour to the highest place, but only because he hath in chiefest estimation the pleasure of Almighty God; he, I say shall find no difficulty in any other thing, seing he hath renounced for the loue of God the highest degree of excellency to which he could

arriue, and this is the chiefeſt thing which we can depart with, and leaue for to conforme our ſelues vnto the will of God. If it be Gods pleaſure that I ſhould die inſtantly, and haue leſſe glory, I had rather do ſo, then liue twenty or thirty yeares more, although I were to merit a higher degree of glory, and on the contrary, although I were aſſured of the glory of heauen, if I died at this preſent, yet if God ſhould pleaſe to retaine me yet longer for diuers yeares, in this priſon and baniſhment of mine in ſuffering many labours and miſeries, I ſhould rather do it then go preſently to heauen, ſeing the good pleaſure of God, and the fulfilling of his holy will, is my only content and glory, *tu es gloria mea, & exaltans caput meum.*

**Psal. 3. 4.**

**Lib. 3. c.**

**2. vitz S.**

**P. Ignat.**

There is recounted of our B. F. S. *Ignatius*, a rare and remarkable example in this kind, he being on day with *F. Laynes* and others, vpon the occaſion of a diſcourſe they had, ſaid to *F. Laynes*: what would you do, in caſe our Lord ſhould propoſe to your choice in this manner. If you will dy preſently, I will releaſe you from the priſon of your body, and beſtow vpon you my eternall glory, but

but if you will liue longer, I giue you no certainty of what may happen to you, but vpon your perill be it, so as if you liue and perseuer in vertue I will reward you for it eternally: If you cease to be good, I will Iudge you according to your works. If, I say, our Sauour should say thus vnto you, and you in remaining longer in life, could do some great and notable seruice to his diuine Maiestie what do you thinke should you choose, what would you answer him? vnto whom *F. Laynes* replied. I confesse ingeniously to your Reuerence, that I should choose to go instantly to enioy Almighty God, and put my saluation in security, leauing nothing to daunger in a thing of so high consequence. Then said our B. Father to him, for my part I do assure you I should not do so, but if I imagined that with longer liuing I could do God any particular seruice, I should humbly beseech him, to giue me life so long vntill I had discharged it and should haue no regard vnto my selfe, but all to him, without careing either for mine owne daunger or security. And in this doing he was not of opiniō that he should put his saluation in icopardy or daunger, but

but rather that he should the more secure it, seeing that out of confidence in God, he had chosen for his greater service, to remaine here exposed still to daungers; For what King, or Prince is there in the world, said he, who after he had offered his seruant some extraordinary recompence for his seruice, and the seruant had respited the acceptance of it, the better to do some important thing for him, who would not hold himselfe in a manner obliged, not only to reserve it for him, but to giue it him afterwards with addition, seeing that he had deprived himselfe of the present possession of it only out of loue to him, and his affection to do him greater seruice. Now if men who are so forgetfull of benefits and ingratfull, will do so much, how much more are we to hope for, from such a Lord, who with his grace hath so preuented vs, and obliged vs with so many speciall fauours? how can we feare, that he will abandon vs and let vs fall, when we haue differrd our beatitude, and forborne the fruition of it, for his sake alone? We cannot beleue nor feare so much, of such a Lord as he.

THE XXXII. CHAPTER.

Of conformity, union, and perfect loue  
of God, and how we are to apply this  
exercise to practise.

**T**Hat we may the better perceau the  
perfection and excellency which is  
comprized in this exercise, as also how  
farre we may arriue by means of it, we  
will (for end and conclusion to this trea-  
rise) speake somewhat of that sublime ex-  
ercise of the loue of God, as it is taught  
by the Saints and Masters of spirituall  
life; and it seemeth to come fitly for our  
purpose, seing that one of the principall  
effects of loue (according to *S. Denis the*  
*Areopagit*) is to make the will of the be-  
loued its owne, so as to will and not will  
the same in euery thing: whence the more  
one hath of conformity with God Al-  
mighties will, the more he hath of the  
loue of God; and the more loue he hath,  
the more straitly is he vnited and confor-  
med vnto his will. To declare this the bet-  
ter it is necessary that we ascend into hea-  
uen with our consideration, and behold  
in what manner the blessed there are  
louing and conforming themselves vnto  
X the

*S. Dion.  
cap. 4. de  
diuin.  
nomina.*

the liking & the will of God, in hauing one will with him, since the higher we shall conform our selues to that, the more perfect shall be our exercise. The glorious Apostle and Euangelist *S. Iohn* saith that the vision of God, doth beget in the blessed a similitude vnto him; *Quoniam cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus, quod illam videbimus eum sicuti est*, and that because in seeing God they are in such manner vnited with him, and transformed into him, that they haue in common but one will and liking; Now let vs see what is this will, liking, and loue of God, that we may with all arrive to know what the desire and will of the blessed is, and gather from thence what our will & perfect loue ought to be. The will of God and his most soueraigne and perfect loue, is his owne glory, and his being so supremely perfect and glorious as he is; and this is the same loue which possesseth the blessed in heauen; so that the loue of the Saints and blessed is, a loue and desire, by which with all their forces they loue and desire that God should be what he is, and of himselfe so good, so glorious, so worthy of all honour, and so mighty as he is,

with the will of God. Chap. 32. 323

is; and seeing they behold in God all which they do desire; therefore is it that they reioyce in full fruition of that fruite of the holy Ghost, of which the Apostle speaketh, *fructus autem spiritus est gaudium*, to wit, an vnspokeable ioy to behold him whom they so dearly loue, so rich in himselfe with euery better thing. Fro that which we see ordinarily to happen in this world we may giue an imperfect gesse at the Diuine Ioy which the blessed in heauen receaue in this particular. Do but marke how great the ioy and contentment is of a child here on earth, to see his Father whom he tenderly respecteth, beloued, honoured, and gratfull vnto all; or wise, rich, mighty, and gracious with his King? alluredly there are children of so toward nature, and choyce education, as will not sticke to say, that there is no ioy in the world to be compared, to that which they receaue fro seeing their Fathers in so prosperous state. Now if this ioy here can be so great, where loue is so cold, and the things which occasion their ioy so slight and poore, what may the contentment of the blessed be, to see their rightfull Lord, and Creator, and

Ad Gala:  
5. 22.

their celestiaall Father, into whom they are so transformed through loue, so good, so holy, so excellently faire, so infinitely powerfull and great; how all created things haue their being and beauty from his will alone, without which not a single leafe can shake vpon a tree: which saith the Apostle *S. Paul* is a ioy so great, as neither eye hath scene, nor eare hath heard, nor any heart hath comprehended it. This is that deepe and mighty riuer which *S. Iohn* saw in his reuelations, flowing forth from the Throne of God and from the Lambe, reioycing the City of Almighty God; of whose waters the blessed in heauen do drinke, and being inebriat with this holy loue, chaunt out perpetually that *Alleluia* of which *S. Iohn* doth speake, together blessing and glorifying God. *Alleluia, quoniam regnauit Dominus Deus noster omnipotens, gaudeamus & exulemus & de eius gloria ei*, there they reioyce and are delighted with the greatnes of God Almightyes glory, congratulating with him, and rendering him a thousand benedictions for the same with an incredible ioy and iubilatiō. *Benedictio, & claritas, & sapientia,*

1. Cor. 13.  
9.  
Apoc 22.  
1. & Psal.  
45. 5.  
Apo. 19.  
6. & 7.  
Apoc. 7.  
12.



*with the will of God. Chap. 32. 325*  
*tia, & gratiarum actio, honor & virtus*  
*& fortitudo Deo nostro in secula seculorum, Amen.*

This is the loue which the Saints do  
 beare to Almighty God in heauen, this  
 is their vnity & conformity with his blef-  
 sed will, speaking in proportion to our  
 meane capacity, and this is that which ac-  
 cording to our small ability, we are to in-  
 deauour to imitate on earth, that the wil-  
 of God may be done on earth; as it is in  
 heauen. *Inspice & fac secundum exem-* Exod. 25.  
*plar, quod tibi in monte monstratum est,* 40.  
 marke well, and do according to that pat-  
 terne which hath been shewed you in the  
 mount, said our Lord vnto *Moyſes*, when  
 he commaunded him to erect him a Ta-  
 bernacle: and so ought we to do all things  
 here, conformable to that modell and  
 sampler which is proposed vnto vs to  
 worke after, on that high mountaine of  
 glory, and so are we to loue and desire  
 that which the blessed in heauen loue &  
 desire, as also that which God himselſe  
 both willeth and liketh, which is his  
 glory, and his being soueraignly perfect  
 and glorious.

M. Auſa  
 to. 1. ep.  
 P. Fran.  
 Arias p.  
 2. profect  
 spir. tra.  
 s. c. 3. &  
 4.  
 P. Lud.  
 de Puér.  
 3. to. me.  
 dit. p. 6.

Now vnto the end that each one may

the better bestow him selfe vpon this holy exercise, we will in brieft declare the practise of it. When you are in prayer, consider with your vnderstanding the infinit being of God, his eternitie, his omnipotence, his infinit wisdom, beauty, glory, and blessednes; and then exercise the affections of ioy and pleasure with your will, making it your only delight and comfort that God is what he is, that he is God, that he hath his being and endles goodnes only dependant on him selfe, without standing in need of any one; whereas all besides do stand in need of him, in that he is omnipotent, supremely good, exceeding glorious, and all within him selfe. In the like manner are we to consider, all the other perfections and infinit good which is in Almighty God. *This as S. Thomas* saith and with him the diuins in generall, is the greatest and perfectest acte of the loue of God, and so likewise is it the most supreme and excellent exercise of conformity with the will of God, seing there is no greater nor perfecter loue of God, then that which God doth beare vnto him selfe, which is the loue of his owne glory and being, to wit souerainly perfect and glo-

3. Tho.

21. q. 28.

art. 5. ad

3. & ar. 1

glorious, neither can any one haue a better will then this. Therefore the more excellent and perfect your loue shall be, the greater resemblance it shall haue vnto the loue which God doth beare himselfe, and the more great and perfect likewise shall be our vnion and conformity with his omnipotent will. Moreouer the Philosophers do teach, that *amare est velle alicui bonum eius causa*, & non sui ipsius, to loue is to wish good vnto an other, not for his owne sake, but his only whom he loueth, whence it followeth that the more good we wish an other, the more loue we beare him. Now the greatest good which we can wish Almighty God, is that which he hath already, as his infinit being, his goodnes, wisdom, omnipotence, and endles glory. When we beare affection to any creature, we are not only delighted with the good which he is owner of, but haue also scope to wish him some good, beyond that which he hath already, seing the goodnes of all creatures may receaue addition: but we cannot wish any good to God which already he is not possessed of, seing he is euery way infinit, and so can haue no

Aristot.  
Rhet. li.  
2. c. 4.

more power, no more glory, no more wisdom, nor more goodness than he hath. And for this cause the greatest good which we can wish to him, and consequently the greatest love which we can bear him, is to be glad and reioyce, and to take all our pleasure & contentment that God hath so much good as he hath, that he is so good as he is, so rich, so powerfull, so infinit and glorious.

Hence it is that, as the Saints which are in heaven, and the most sacred humanity of *Christ* our Saviour, together with his glorious virgin Mother & all the Quires of Angels, do reioyce to see God so beautiful & superabounding with every good: which ioy and delight of theirs cannot containe it selfe from bursting forth into loud praises of such an excellent Lord; neither can they be satisfied with blessing and praising of him without end. And as the holy Prophet singeth. *Beati qui habitant in domo tua Domine, in secula seculorum laudabunt te*, euen so ought we to vnite our hearts, and raise our voyces to that high pitch of theirs, as we are taught by our holy Mother the Church, *cum quibus, & nostras voces, ut admitti iubeas*

*Psal. 83.*  
51

*with the will of God. Chap. 32. 329*  
*inbeas deprecamur supplici cōfessionē di-*  
*centes, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Domi-*  
*nus Deus Sabaoth. pleni sunt cali & terra*  
*gloriatua. We ought perpetually (or with*  
*the greatest frequency as we can) to praise*  
*and glorify God, in reioycing and deligh-*  
*ting our selues with that glory and soue-*  
*ranity which he hath; blessing him, and*  
*congratulating with him for the same:*  
*wherby we shall resemble in our imper-*  
*fect manner the blessed in heauen, and*  
*Almighty God himselfe; exercising the*  
*highest act of loue, and the most perfect*  
*conformity with the will of God, as can*  
*possibly be imagined.*

## THE XXXIII. CHAPTER.

*How much this exercise is commended*  
*unto vs and inculcated in holy*  
*scripture.*

**W**E may yet better comprehend  
the value and excellency of this  
exercise and conceiue how acceptable it  
is to God, in that it is so much recom-  
mended and often iterated in the holy  
scripture; whence also we may lay hold

on the occasion to exercise it more, and insist vpon it longer. The Royall Prophet David in his Psalmes doth almost in euery verse inuite vs to this holy exercise.

Psal. 31.

31.

Psal. 32.

32.

Psal. 36.

36.

*Letamini in Domino & exultate iusti, & gloriamini omnes recti corde.*

*Exultate iusti in Domino. Delectare in Domino & dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.*

Reioyce in our Lord, and exult o yea iust, and glory all you of a right heart.

Yea righteous exult in our Lord. Reioyce in him (and in his infinit goodnes)

and he will graunt you the petitions of your owne heart, or rather, all which you

shall desire and stand in necessity of. For this is a prayer, by which without, setting

your selfe to pray, you pray, and God heareth the desires of your heart, to

shew how much he is delighted with this prayer of yours. And the Apostle S. Paul

Ad Phil.

4. 4.

writing to the *Philippians* saith, reioyce alwaies in our Lord: *Gaudete in Domino semper*,

and thinking it not sufficient to haue said it once, he addes, *iterum dico gaudete*,

I say againe to you, reioyce. And this was the ioy which informed the sacred

Virgins purest heart, when in her Canticle shee said; *Et exultauit spiritus meus in*

*Deo*

with the will of God. Chap. 33. 332

*Deo salutari meo*, and my soule hath exulted in God my saluation. And with this ioy likewise was our B. Sauour Christ replenished when (as the sacred Euangell testifieth of him) *exultauit Spiritu Sancto*: he reioyced in the holy Ghost. And the royall Prophet said, that the ioy and contentment was so passing great which his soule receaued, from the consideration of the great felicity & glory of God, and so becoming it was for euery one, to reioyce in that infinit goodnes which is in him, as euen the soules ioy out of its abundance had influence into his body, and set his flesh on fier with the same loue of God; *Cor meum & caro mea exultauerunt in Deum uiuum*, my heart & flesh haue exulted in the liuing God, and in an other place: *Anima mea exultabit in Domino, & delectabitur super salutari tuo; omnia ossa mea dicent, Domine quis similis tibi?* my soule shall reioyce in God, and be delighted with the Author of it saluation, and all my bones shall say, O my Lord who is like to thee? And because this loue is a thing so celestiall and diuine, our Mother the Church directed by the Holy Ghost, in the beginning

Psal. 94.  
1. & 2.

ginning of her Canonicall howers, inuited vs by this *Inuitatorium*, to loue our Lord in this manner, to reioyce, to triūph in his endles perfection and it is the beginning of the 94. Psalme: *Venite exultemus Domino, iubilemus Deo salutarino-*  
*stro; praecurpemus faciem eius in confessione, & in Psalmis iubilemus ei,* come all and reioyce in our Lord, and sing canticles of iubilation to his eternall praise, who is our saluation, seing he is God and a mighty Lord and King aboue all Gods seing the sea is his and he made it, and his hands haue founded the dry Land: *Quoniam Deus magnus Dominus & Rex magnus super omnes Deos &c. Quoniam ipsius est mare, & ipse fecit illud & arida fundauerunt manus eius,* for this reason and the same end the holy Church concludeth all it Psalmes with this versicle. *Gloria Patri, & filio, & Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio & nunc & semper, & in secula seculorum, Amen,* & this is that entrance into the ioy of our Lord which our Sauour spoke of in the  
 Mar. 25. Ghospell. *Intra in gaudium Domini tui,*  
 21. where we are made partakers of the infinitiōy of God, by reioycing & delighting  
 our



*with the will of God.* Chap. 33. 333  
our selues with him for his glory, beauty,  
and riches, all infinit.

Now to the end that we may take  
pleasure in this exercise, and endeaour  
to proceed alwaies therein with this cheer-  
fulnes and ioy, it will much helpe vs to  
consider how good God is, how faire,  
how glorious: in all which he is *so passing*  
infinit, that his only vision doth render  
those who do enioy it blessed; in so much  
as should but the damned in hell, once  
haue a glimps of him, all their paine and  
torments would be turned to ioy, & Hell  
would be changed to a Paradyse; *Hec*

*est autem vita aeterna, ut cognoscant te* Ioan. 17.  
*solum Deum verum,* saith our Sauour

Christ in the Euangell of Saint Iohn.  
This is eternall life, that they know  
thee the only true God; this is that  
which maketh them blessed, and that not  
only for a day, or yeare, but for eternitie;  
in such manner as neuer to be satiat with  
seing God, but the delight therof shall  
be alwaies new vnto them, according to

that of the Apocalyps: *Et cantabunt quasi* Apo. 14.  
*canticum nouum,* they shall alwaies sing  
as if their song were new. This seemeth to  
me sufficiently to declare the infinit good-

3. Th. 1.  
p. 9. 26.  
ar. 2.

nes beauty and perfection of God; but notwithstanding there is alwaies somewhat to adde, yea infinitely more. God is so faire, so glorious; that euen in seeing himselfe he is made happy: so as the glory and felicity of God, is to see & loue himselfe. Imagin therefore, what reason we haue to be glad and to reioyce, in a goodnes, beauty and glory, so infinitely great, as to fill with delicious content the whole Citie of God, rendring all the Citizens blest who inhabit it, & euen God himselfe happy in knowing and louing of himselfe.

## THE XXXIV. CHAPTER.

*How we may yet farther extend this holy exercise.*

**W**E may yet farther dilate and enlarge our selues vpon this subiect, in descending to the consideration of the most sacred humanity of *Christ* our Lord, from the contemplation of his diuinity; obseruing the great dignity and perfection therof, and from thence receauing particular pleasure and delight, in that

with the Will of God. Chap. 34. 335  
that the sacred humanity of Christ is so  
highly exalted, and straitly vnited to his  
diuinity, that it is enriched with all aboun-  
dance of grace and glory, that it is the in-  
strument of the diuinity, to exploit those  
highest mysteries of the sanctification and  
glorification of all the elect, and impart  
those supernaturall gifts and graces which  
God distributeth and bestoweth on men.  
And finally we are to reioyce & receaue  
exceeding pleasure from euery particular  
of the perfection and glory of the most  
blessed soule, and sacred body of our Re-  
deemer Iesus Christ; insisting therupon  
with a truly viscerall loue & delectation;  
In such manner as the Saints do contem-  
plate him, and the sacred virgin beheld  
him on the day of his glorious resurre-  
ction, rising from death so bright and  
triumphantly; in fine with such affection  
as the holy Patriarch *Jacob* did declare,  
when (as the scripture saith) hearing that  
his soone was yet liuing, and Lord of all  
*Egypt*, he was surprized with so excessiue  
ioy that his decayed spirits being reuiued  
therby, he said, it is sufficient if my sonne  
*Ioseph* liueth, I desire no more, then only  
to go and see him, and then I shall be con-  
tent to dy.

And

Gen. 45.  
38.

And we may extend this exercise vnto the glory of the immaculate virgin and all the other Saints, and it would be a good and laudable deuotion, vpon their particular feasts, to spend some part of our prayer in this exercise, seing it is the most especiall seruice and honour which we can exhibit to them, as declaring the greatest loue that we can beare them, which is, to wish them all the good which they can possibly haue, and reioyce and congratulat their great & excellent glory. Which exercise the holy Church proposeth to our deuotions on the feast of the euer glorious Virgin. *Hodie Maria virgo calos ascendit, gaudete, quia cum Christo regnat in eternū*, to day the virgin Mary ascendeth vp to heauen, reioyce therfore because shee raigneth eternally with God. And the office of the holy Masse, both in this solemnity and diuers others, doth inuite vs to this holy exercise, and incite vs by the example of Angells in this office imploved. *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino diem festum celebrantes. sub honore beata Maria Virginis, de cuius Assumptione gaudent Angeli, & collaudat filium Dei*, let vs euery on reioyce in our Lord, in celebra-

celebrating this feast day, in honour of the B. Virgin *Mary*, for whose Assumption the Angells reioyce, and praise the sonne of God. There is moreouer an other great good and profit resulting from this deuotion vnto the Saints, and particularly vnto the sacred humanity of *Christ* our Lord; which is, that from hence we come by little and little to raise our selues, vnto a higher light of the diuinity, seing as *Christ* Ioan. 10. our Sauour saith this is the way, & gate 7. & Ioan. 14. 6. which leadeth vs vnto the eternall Father,

This exercise of considering God so far-forth as he is God, hath likewise its degrees; and we may render it more familiar vnto vs by descending vnto the consideration of worldly things; for although it is most certaine, that God in himselfe can receaue no increase, seing he is euery waies infinit, and therfore there is no good falling within the compasse of our wish which he hath not already: neuertheles he may accidentally in his creatures become greater and increase, when he is better knowne, more loued & serued by them; and therfore there is place for vs to employ our selues in this act of loue,

in wishing to God the addition of this exterior good. And so the deuout soule by considering in prayer, how most worthy God Almighty is, to be loued, honoured and serued of his creatures, is to wish and earnestly desire that all the soules which are, or euer shall be, may know him, loue him, praise him, and glorify him in euery thing (and out of the depth of its deare affection say) ô Lord who shall conuert all the Infidells and sinners of the world, so as there may not be left any to offend you more, but that all may be obedient to you, and employ themselues wholly vnto your seruice, both now, and for euer

Marc. 6. more: *Sanctificetur nomen tuum. Omnis*  
 9. *terra adoret te & psallat tibi, psalmum*  
 Psal. 65. *dicat nomini tuo.* And here we may insist  
 4. and imagine with our selues a thousand waies wherby creatures may come to serue Almighty God, and wish them all particularly put in practise.

From hence is each on to descend vnto a desire of performing the will of God, & procuring his greater glory in euery thing which belongeth to them to do; euer endeavouring to do whatsoeuer we may know to be the will of God & redounding

ing to his greater glory. Conformable  
to that which our Sauour saith of him-  
selfe in the Euangell, *quia ego qua placita Ioan. 8.*  
*sunt ei, facio semper*, I do alwaies that 29.  
which is pleasing to my Father. For as S.  
Iohn the Euangelist saith, *qui dicit se Ioan. 2.*  
*nosse Deum & mandata eius non custo-* 4.  
*dit, mendax est, & in hoc veritas non est,*  
he who affirmeth that he knoweth God,  
and doth not keepe his comaundements,  
is a lyer, and there is no truth in him; *Qui*  
*autem seruat verbum eius verè in hoc*  
*charitas Dei perfecta est*, but he who  
obserueth his word hath the charity of  
God perfectly indeed within him.

So that to loue God, and to haue an  
entire conformity with his will, it is not  
sufficient that a man conceaueth a great  
ioy and delectation, for the felicity which  
God enioyeth, or desireth that all crea-  
tures may loue and glorify him, but it is  
requisit that he resigne himselfe wholly  
to the accomplishmēt of the will of God:  
for how can one say with any colour of  
truth that he desireth the greater glory of  
God, when euen in those things which  
lie in him to do, he procureth it not? And  
this is that loue which a soule actuateth,

when in prayer it conceiueth good purposes and true desires of performing the will of God, in this or that, or any particular thing which may present its selfe; with which exercise we commonly entertaine our selues in prayer.

Thus haue we laid open a large field, to exercise our selues for long time together in prayer, and declared the great profit, and rare perfection which is comprehended in this exercise: wherefore there only remaineth that we set our hand to worke, and begin be times on earth to take essay, of that which we are euer after to practise in so excellent a manner in heauen. *Cuius ignis est in Sion, & caminus eius, in Hierusalem*, here we are to enkindle in our selues that fier of loue, but the flame therof must shine and spread it selfe, and its height and sublime perfection appeare in the celestially Hierusalem, which is our lasting glory.

Isai. 31.  
9.



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